

BCOE-144 Ofice Management and Secretarial Practices





BCOE-144 Office Management and Secretarial Practices

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

In the present times, office management is a blend of workplace design, culture and technology. The contemporary business world would come to a standstill without computers and the internet. In today's world, automation software is the need of the hour, and we are also ready to welcome artificial intelligence as the part of office mechanization. Who would have believed that all this office transformation started with the simple typewriter? Indeed, the office has come a long way since it became divergent from the home in the 17th century.

Educational Institutions like Indira Gandhi National Open University which is pioneer in self paced technology enabled learning, played an important role in building contents for learners in this regard. Office management and secretarial practices course mainly provide opportunities to learn the use of latest technologies such as using personal computers, laptops, word processing, spreadsheet, payrolls and desktop publishing software to run the office smoothly.

This course is offered in both online as well as offline mode under the Program B.Com (G) and BCOMOL. BCOE-144 is one of the Discipline Specific Elective Course (6 credits) that is taught in 6th Semester of B.Com (G) programme offered under CBCS scheme. Intention behind Discipline Specific Electives (DSEs) is specific to the subject of the study with an extended scope.

Office Management and Secretarial Practices course may be considered as one of the skill oriented courses which make IGNOU learners well versed with office administration, office management, business administration and business management. The main objective of this course is to familiarize the learners with the knowledge and understanding that makes them familiar with the contemporary ways of understanding the functioning of office management and secretarial practices. Self Learning Material (SLM) has noteworthy features that consist of 21 units bifurcated into 6 blocks.

Office Management and Secretarial Practices trains manpower with knowledge and skills for handling varied responsibilities of an office for the efficient management and administration of staff and resources such as safeguarding of data, files & records, payrolls administration, space management, office communication, office facility management for day to day functioning, coordinating meetings, etc. It also provides the management knowledge required by those who will eventually acquire the position of office managers. After passing this course, the learners will acquire many administrative avenues both in public and private sector organizations.





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BLOCK 1 INTRODUCTION TO OFFICE

THE PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY

BLOCK 1 INTRODUCTION TO OFFICE

This is the very first block of the course "Office Management and Secretarial Practices." This block will give a proper glimpse about the conceptual framework of the office. It enlighten the learners with various aspects related to office, office space and virtual space. This block is structured to cover the fundamentals and preliminary aspects of office and office etiquette. The block on the theme "Introduction to office" comprises of three units, the detail of which is mentioned below:

Unit 1: Discusses about the concept of office and lists the factors affecting the office. It talks about office layout and office location. The later part of the unit deals with office procedures and their importance and makes the readers familiar with the role of a company office and lists the various skills and equipment needed in the office and discusses the various types of offices.

Unit 2: Makes the learners aware about various important aspects related to office space and virtual office in terms of its features, advantages and disadvantages. It discusses the concept of a hybrid office. It states how a virtual office is different from a physical office. The unit also emphasizes virtual meeting space and its benefits. It also discusses the work from home culture, its advantages and disadvantages.

Unit 3: Discusses the meaning of office etiquettes and explains why it is important. It also explains the do's and don'ts of office etiquette. The later part of the unit deals with a case study for a deeper understanding on office etiquettes.



UNIT 1 ABOUT THE OFFICE

Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Meaning of Office
- 1.3 Office Layout
- 1.4 Office Location
- 1.5 Office Procedures
- 1.6 Role of A Company Office
- 1.7 Equipments & Skills Used in Offices
 - 1.7.1 Equipments Used in Offices
 - 1.7.2 Skills Used in Offices
- 1.8 Types of Offices
- 1.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.10 Keywords
- 1.11 Terminal Questions

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to;

- understand the meaning of office;
- know about office layout and its various objectives;
- list the factors affecting office location;
- know about office procedures and their importance;
- understand the role of a company office;
- list the various skills and equipments needed in the office; and
- understand the different types of offices.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Complexities of business are increasing day by day. In the earlier times, products were usually made of locally available raw materials and served to the local market only. But advances in science, technology, industrialization, transport, communication, etc. have reformulated the concept view of the office. Now offices are developed on scientific principle and their management and administration are in the hands of qualified and trained managerial personnel.

There is no secret that office environments are changing very fast over the last few decades. Office cultures are in constant flux; with a growing interest in collaboration and teamwork. Many corporations are opting for a flatter corporate structure. Companies are knocking down walls and installing treadmill desks, collaboration rooms, and nap spaces. It is not to deny the open office environment is becoming more prevalent and appears to be here to stay, at least for now. In many ways, this new environment offers a plethora of positive outcomes, such as a higher level of interaction and transparency, more willingness to collaborate, higher level of trust and accountability. However, this big change can come with a host of negative consequences as well, namely, employees not adjusting properly to their new surroundings.

1.2 MEANING OF OFFICE

The English word "Office" first came into light in 1395, which alluded to a "place where business is executed", however, the word has more established roots. Office word is taken from the Latin word Officium, which didn't guarantee to allude to a particular spot but instead a department in the feeling of staff, or on the other hand, the more theoretical significance of formal position. In layman's terms, an office is a workplace where people are engaged in an assigned task in a hierarchical manner for the fulfillment of the organization's common objectives and goals. It is basically an information processing unit facilitating the responsible authorities taking sound decisions for achieving the organization's goals. An office is a space where an association's representatives perform administrative work to help and acknowledge the items and objectives of the association. "Office" may likewise indicate a situation inside an association with explicit obligations joined to it; the last option is as a matter of fact a prior utilization, office as spot initially alluding to the area of one's an obligation. Whenever utilized as a descriptor, the expression "office" may allude to business-related assignments.

In modern terms, an office is usually the location where white-collar workers carry out their functions. As indicated by James Stephenson, "Office is that part of the business undertaking which is dedicated to the heading and coordination of its different exercises." The size of an office ranges from a little office the seat toward the edge of a small business of minuscule size, through whole floors of structures, up to and including enormous structures devoted completely to one organization. Both the structure and shape of offices are impacted by the top management. Office management involves the planning, design, and implementation of work in an organization and its offices. This includes creating a focused work environment and guiding and coordinating the activities of office personnel.



1.3 OFFICE LAYOUT

Office layout means the systematic arrangement of office equipment, machines, and furniture and providing adequate space to office personnel for regular performance of work with efficiency. In simpler words, it is the blueprint of the office floor, and hence, also called the office floor plan. While taking decisions about office layout the onus lies on the office manager. An office manager should make sure the proper allocation of space to each section and interlink them with other sections. Faulty or improper arrangements lead to unnecessary wastage of time and energy and thus lead to an increase in the cost of office operations. A standard office layout should ensure proper allocation of floor space, easy supervision, no waste of time and energy of office personnel, efficiency to staff, and better use of office resources and equipment. Office layout can be divided into two major categories: Process Layout and Group Layout. In the process layout, both the machines and employees are arranged in sequence of the activities to be carried out. Whereas, in a group layout, employees are placed in a separate place where similar activities are carried out. Whereas the machines are placed in the other sections. By keeping all these in mind the main objectives of office layout are:

- To ensure effective use of the available floor space;
- To facilitate managers with better supervision and control of their workforce;
- To ensure steady and effective workflow;
- To ensure a wholesome environment for the workforce:
- To facilitate inter-communication between various departments as and when needed; and
- To include provisions for future expansion of the company etc.

1.4 OFFICE LOCATION

Office location means the place or site where the office organization is situated. Deciding about the business location is one of the most crucial tasks, as it largely affects employees' job satisfaction and work-life balance. An organization's present and future plans must be taken into consideration while deciding about the location. The location could be one where the entire company can be served efficiently at an economical cost. Various factors which must be taken into consideration while making the decision about the office location are listed below:

1. Availability of sufficient space: Sufficient accommodation and facilities should be there in an office to meet present requirements to future expansions. The office should have sufficient accommodation and facilities, rooms and storage space, etc.

- **2. Proximity to other departments:** The office should ensure appropriate proximity to other departments and must be located in a central place to be easily accessible to other sections or departments.
- **3. Availability of transport facilities:** An office should have a proximity to transport facilities, providing convenience to office workers and other outsiders dealing with it.
- **4. Service facilities:** Besides transport, the office location should have proximity to other linked facilities as well such as banking, postal, internet, telephone. insurance etc.
- **5. Healthy environment:** The office surroundings should be free from dust, noise, congestion, obnoxious smell, and fumes as these factors may lead to reducing the work efficiency of office employees.

1.5 OFFICE PROCEDURES

Office procedures are the set of standards for the staff working in an office. It is often a set of rules or policies guiding the operations of an office or small business. An office procedure basically is an organization's formal process to collect necessary information for effective and efficient decision-making. Having stringent and clearly defined office procedures helps in creating a uniform way of doing things which leads to consistency, efficiency, and professionalism within the office environment. It can also help employees to better understand the job description and focus on priority tasks. Office procedures often fall in line with company policies. The office can be presented to the employees in any way; they can either be put on bulletin boards or can be distributed in office manuals or any other way desired by the company. For example, an office procedure can mandate employees' actions while at work (i.e., no personal phone calls, checking voicemail in the mornings, no unnecessary conversations with clients). They can also include the handling of office equipment such as reloading empty copy machines and refilling staplers. The importance of office procedures is discussed below:

- 1. Ensures efficiency in the workplace;
- 2. Allows for effective training for new staff;
- 3. Enhances performances of old staff;
- 4. Facilitates the better flow of work in the office and between departments;
- 5. Ensures, consistency, and professionalism of an office task;
- 6. Instills discipline in an organization;
- 7. Reduces the general cost of operations; and
- 8. Reduces chances of errors and fraud.

About the Office Check Your Progress A: What do you understand by the term Office? "Deciding about the business location is one of the most crucial tasks." Comment. Differentiate between Process layout and Group layout. "An organization's present and future plans must be taken into consideration while deciding about the location." Comment.

1.6 ROLE OF A COMPANY OFFICE

The main functions of offices are decision-making and providing information. Decision-making involves executing managerial functions such as planning, organizing, coordinating, directing, controlling, motivating, innovating, and integrating and providing information and other services to company departments and units, customers, suppliers, investors, employers and regulating authorities. In any organization an office has two different

roles, those are; a Contributory role and a vigilant role. These roles are dependent on the function being performed as discussed below:

- 1. Office work in a contributory role, when it;
 - Assist sub-units to regulate the business activities in the light of external situation changes;
 - Receive information from internal and external units;
 - Transmit decisions, views, and comments to other linked units;
 - Maintain records and other important historical information;
 - Provide professional services in ancillary activities such as selecting and hiring, maintaining personnel records, providing legal advice, corresponding with external units, training, designing systems etc.
- 2. Office work in a Vigilant role, when it;
 - Assist in maintaining discipline;
 - See that employees adhere to rules and regulations;
 - Is responsible for budgetary control, etc.

1.7 EQUIPMENTS & SKILLS USED IN OFFICES

One needs to have a set of specific skills and certain types of equipment for working in an office. The skills and equipment may vary slightly depending upon the type of office but overall, they are quite the same.

1.7.1 Equipments Used in Offices

- 1. Paper-Related Equipment: Certain office equipment are vital for the paper aspects of the business. Examples include photocopy machines for making copies of documents, printers for printing documents and emails required for the purpose of documentation or shredders for disposing off sensitive materials which are no longer required.
- **2. Computers:** Nowadays computers have become the most important equipment in the office. They are used for mailing, creating documents, scanning or data entry depending upon the type of office.
- **3. Internet:** A good speed internet connection is must for any office, it contributes to the completion of daily tasks. Without a sound internet connection, the office's procedures will be hindered or delayed, which will lead to inefficiency while completing a task and thus will hamper the sharing of internal or external information within an office.
- **4. Furniture:** A right type of furniture in place makes the office look more pleasant and professional. Choosing the right type of office furniture plays an important role in increasing the employee's efficiency thus contributes to a positive attitude at the workplace.

1.7.2 Skills Used in Offices

- 1. Communication Skills: An employee must have good communication skills for being successful in an office environment. The type of communication varies on the basis of job description. Both written and oral communication are important. Some employees need to write well and communicate through regular emails or some need to answer phone calls and speak to clients of the company on a regular basis. Depending on the job, negotiations may even be necessary.
- 2. Management Skills: Every employee needs to manage themselves in their job. He must be able to look at their workload and set priorities by determining which tasks need to be done first and which ones can be done later. He must be able to manage his time efficiently for completing a maximum number of tasks throughout the day.
- **3. Problem-Solving Skills:** An employee must have problem-solving skills for figuring out the best way to complete tasks and fix the issues that may arise. Employees must have coordination qualities to work together as a team and they may use brainstorming techniques for solving problems and completing projects.
- 4. Computer Skills: Various offices give priority to people who have experience and knowledge with specific types of software that the company uses, for instance, financial software or accounting software. If the company hires someone who does not have these skills, he needs to be provided with additional training for doing his job well. The ability to catch and learn things quickly and solve simple computer issues is also an important skill for employees to have.

1.8 TYPES OF OFFICES

Offices come in different shapes, sizes and classes. One may choose the type of office that may suit the specific needs. The various types of offices are discussed below:

- 1. Traditional Office: A traditional office is ideal if the business is indulged in financial services, hedge funds, law firms or similar. The traditional or classic office layout includes a reception, boardroom and private offices and gives quiet and private areas that help employees work and converse with the clients.
- 2. Creative Office: It focuses on teamwork and collaboration. It is characterized by fewer barriers and more transparency. Creative offices are more popular in start-up companies, creative agencies, advertising agencies, and others. They are also space-efficient and employees can be fitted in tables rather than cubicles.

- **3. Private Office:** It is rented to an individual entity which comes in all sizes ranging from one person to hundred. It is characterized by a lockable room which is located within a shared office facility. It provides a quiet, secure and confidential space to work and allows one to join in with the wider professional community.
- 4. Coworking Office: It is one of the most flexible and favored types of office which allows one to work alongside other businesses in an open communal office. There is flexibility in terms of the number of desks that one may rent. It is common among start-ups and small companies which need a workspace for an indefinite period of time. Many of these may have unique features like roof terraces or chill-out zones.
- **5. Contiguous Office:** Contiguous offices are usually rented to a single tenant and are made up of multiple but combined suites on the same floor of a building.
- **6. Executive Suites:** It is a fully furnished and serviced office space that is pre-wired for phone and internet services. It is often secured as a sublet with flexible terms: monthly, quarterly or yearly.
- 7. Enterprise Suite: It is a type of managed office that is customizable to suit the needs of larger teams. It is a type of Coworking or serviced office.
- **8. Sublet:** A sublet office allows to rent conventional office space without taking on the responsibility and lease cost. The lead tenant has permission to sublet their office. These offices give an independent feel of the commercial lease without binding any long-term contract or large deposits.

Check Your Progress B:

1.	What is a private office?
2.	Define coworking.

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٠.	successful in an office environment." Comment.
4.	List the features of a private office.

1.9 LET US SUM UP

Complexities of business are increasing day by day. In the earlier times, products were usually made of locally available raw materials and served to the local market only. But advances in science, technology, industrialization, transport, communication, etc. have reformulated the concept view of the office. Now offices are developed on scientific principle and their management and administration are in the hands of qualified and trained managerial personnel.

The English word "Office" first came into light in 1395, which referred to a "place where business is transacted" but the word has older roots. Office word is taken from the Latin word Officium, which didn't necessarily refer to a specific place but rather a bureau in the sense of staff, or the more abstract meaning of formal position. In layman terms, an office is a workplace where people are engaged in an assigned task in a hierarchical manner for the fulfillment of the organization's common objectives and goals.

Office layout means the systematic arrangement of office equipment, machines, and furniture and providing adequate space to office personnel for regular performance of work with efficiency. In simpler words, it is the blueprint of the office floor, and hence, also called the office floor plan. While taking decisions about office layout the onus lies on the office manager. An office manager should make sure the proper allocation of space to each section and interlink them with other sections.

Office location means the place or site where the office organization is situated. Deciding about the business location is one of the most crucial tasks as it largely affects employees' job satisfaction and work-life balance. An

organization's present and future plans must be taken into consideration while deciding about the location. The location must be one, where from the entire organization can be served efficiently at a reasonable cost.

Office procedures are the set of standards for the staff working in an office. It is often a set of rules or policies guiding the operations of an office or small business. An office procedure basically is an organization's formal process to collect necessary information for effective and efficient decision-making. Having stringent and clearly defined office procedures helps in creating a uniform way of doing things which leads to consistency, efficiency, and professionalism within the office environment.

The main functions of offices are decision-making and providing information. Decision-making involves executing managerial functions such as planning, organizing, coordinating, directing, controlling, motivating, innovating, and integrating and providing information and other services to company departments and units, customers, suppliers, investors, employers and regulating authorities. In any organization an office has two different roles, those are, a Contributory role and a vigilant role.

One needs to have a set of specific skills and certain types of equipment for working in an office. The skills and equipment may vary slightly depending upon the type of office but overall, they are quite the same. Various equipment used in offices are paper-related equipment, computers, internet, and furniture, whereas, various desired skills in offices are communication skills, management skills, problem-solving skills, and computer skills.

Offices come in different shapes, sizes and classes. One may choose the type of office that may suit the specific needs. The various types of offices are traditional office, creative office, private office, coworking office, contiguous office, executive suites, enterprise suite, and sublet, etc.

1.10 KEYWORDS

Contiguous office: Contiguous offices are usually rented to a single tenant and are made up of multiple but combined suites on the same floor of a building.

Coworking Office: It is one of the most flexible and favored types of office which allows one to work alongside other businesses in an open communal office.

Creative office: It focuses on teamwork and collaboration. It is characterized by fewer barriers and more transparency.

Enterprise Suite: It is a type of managed office that is customizable to suit the needs of larger teams. It is a type of Coworking or serviced office.

Office Management: Office management involves the planning, design, and implementation of work in an organization and its offices.

Office Layout: Office layout is defined as the arrangement of all physical components within the available floor space to provide the maximum effectiveness and the coordination of these components into an effective or attractive unity.

Office Location: Office location means the place and site where the office of an organization is situated.

Office Procedures: Office procedures set the standard for how a staff works together in the office. It is often a set of rules or policies guiding the operations of an office or small business.

1.11 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1. What is the office layout? State its objectives.
- 2. What do you understand by office location? List the factors affecting office location.
- 3. State the significance of office procedure.
- 4. Why is coworking the most common in start-ups?
- 5. What are the different types of offices? Discuss in detail
- 6. There are different equipment and skills required in an office. Explain.
- 7. Which two types of roles are played by office in an organization? Explain.

Note: These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.

UNIT 2 OFFICES SPACE & VIRTUAL SPACE

Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Meaning of Office Space
- 2.3 Virtual Office
- 2.4 Advantages of Virtual Office
- 2.5 Disadvantages of Virtual Office
- 2.6 Hybrid Office
- 2.7 Differences Between Virtual Office and Physical Office
- 2.8 Virtual Meeting Space
- 2.9 Work From Home (WFH) Culture
 - 2.9.1 Advantages of Work From Home
 - 2.9.2 Disadvantages of Work From Home
- 2.10 Future Trends in the Office Environment
- 2.11 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.12 Keywords
- 2.13 Terminal Questions

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to;

- know about office space;
- explain the concept of virtual office;
- list the advantages and disadvantages of virtual office;
- know about virtual meeting space;
- understand virtual meeting vendors; and
- explain the work from home culture.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Businesses that keep their workforce at the core of their digital transformation now will be market leaders tomorrow. Workers expect more from their employers, and technology is critical capitaliz on the chance to transform the firm. Organizations obtain the competitive advantage of sustainable and productive employees by deploying solutions that improve the worker experience and increase productivity.

2.2 MEANING OF OFFICE SPACE

Office space basically refers to a building or a part of a building that can be used as an office. Offices come in different shapes, sizes and classes. One may choose the type of office that may suit the specific needs.

When it comes to selecting an office space, nowadays business owners and entrepreneurs have a variety of alternatives. They can opt not just traditional office options, but also relatively recent ones, such as co-working spaces and virtual offices. As we all know, the term "office" refers to a role or service linked with a trade or profession, or a specific relationship to others. The primary function of an office environment is to assist its employees in carrying out their duties. Office workstations are often engaged for basic office tasks such as reading, writing, and computer work. Ergonomic furniture, multipurpose workplaces, integrated technology, collaborative surroundings, open spaces, leisure and rest rooms, lighting, decorative motivation, and so on are all part of today's modern office.

Touch-free technologies such as automatic doors, voice-activated elevators, cellphone-controlled hotel room access, hands-free light switches and temperature settings, automated luggage bag tags, and improved airport check-in and security are now being used in office areas to reduce infection.

2.3 VIRTUAL OFFICE

A virtual office is basically a system that offers a business owner all of the benefits of business space – including an office address and phone number, connectivity and administration services, and access to meeting rooms — without the requirement for physical office space. With the rise of mobile solutions such as laptops, cellphones, and tablets, a person may do business practically anywhere in the globe without the need for a permanent office site.

The virtual office has grown in popularity since the COVID-19 pardemic made remote or blended work a necessity. Besides the financial savings involved with having a physical office, virtual offices provide a dynamic environment that is particularly appealing to entrepreneurs, self-employed employees, and small businesses.

Technology has enabled us to bring home the work that we can complete more conveniently on our own. It can also help us better understand how humans work socially, which can lead to more successful social space design and utilization. Virtual offices enable companies to increased productivity, lower commute expenses, and greater flexibility. Virtual offices also have fewer overhead and technological expenditures, giving them a more cost-effective answer to contemporary working.

Virtual offices are not ideal for every business, but they are a wonderful alternative to explore for smaller firms, freelancers, entrepreneurs, and emerging brands that generally operate remotely but want access to occasional office space and outstanding traditional office advantages.

Virtual offices can also contribute to increased productivity because they relieve employees of administrative responsibilities as well as commutes. Each person may work from wherever it is most convenient for them, and the company is not limited to employing people who reside nearby. As more individuals find methods to work remotely, the advantages of a virtual workplace become clear. However, not everything is as simple as it appears.

Virtual offices include the following features:

- Instantly obtain a professional business address;
- Access to conference rooms on demand;
- Handling phone calls and letters;
- Easy access to places across the globe;
- Reduced overhead expenses;
- More satisfied employees; and
- Greater scalability.

2.4 ADVANTAGES OF VIRTUAL OFFICE

The most significant advantages of acquiring virtual office space include the following:

- 1. **Flexibility:** One may work primarily or completely from home. This implies that none are limited by geography, and one may recruit the finest individuals for the position regardless of where they are. One may even choose their own working hours and choose to work from home in their comfort if they like.
- 2. Costs less than hiring a traditional office space: In virtual space, businesses are not renting a full office large enough to accommodate the entire team on a daily basis. This means there is no need to furnish an office, deal with commercial renter's insurance, or pay electricity expenses. There is access to various services, such as assistants or receptionists, which is far less expensive than hiring someone full-time.
- 3. Access to additional services: One significant advantage of virtual offices is the services they provide, such as virtual assistants, answering services, in-office receptionists, and teleconferencing. They may also provide postal services and accept actual mail on your behalf. This means one can never skip a delivery that requires signature, and ideally, every client call will be handled by a virtual receptionist for a human touch before being sent to the voicemail. It is much easier to obtain all of

these services from one source rather than attempting to pay for and manage them through many separate businesses or contractors, so if one wants these advantages, a virtual office is a terrific option to investigate.

- 4. **Established and professional appearance:** Startups enterprises are more widespread than ever before, but it can also be more difficult to win client confidence and establish credibility in some circumstances because "everyone owns their own business." Having an actual company address in an established building and a meeting location for the personnel is as established as it gets, and it helps to inspire client trust in the brand.
- 5. **No maintenance concern:** There is no need to repair those creaking chairs or worry about what would happen to the structure in the event of a severe natural disaster. Because the building's upkeep is not a concern for the company, the business can concentrate on establishing its brand.
- 6. An additional layer of privacy and security: Many startups and small enterprises that work remotely do not have a traditional physical workplace. As a result, the home address of the business owner is frequently disclosed on everything from official business licenses to internet business listings and even customer contracts. This may offer a privacy and security risk, since individuals may simply identify the home address by conducting a Google search with the company's name. One obtains an actual postal address with a virtual office that one may use on any official papers, making it more difficult for others to identify the personal home address. They can even block consumers from seeing the personal phone number if they use their virtual answering service as the primary business line.
- 7. **Fixed address with low overhead costs:** When it comes to establishing a business, having a fixed, permanent location may be a huge benefit. And in certain states, if a business address changes during the year, there is a need to pay for renewing the business license paperwork. Depending on the state, this might cost a few rupees more. It's a pain to notify every single client, banking institution, and business service every time a business switches the location. Having a single permanent address when traveling around is beneficial, especially merely moving around the same city and wanting something more stable.

2.5 DISADVANTAGES OF VIRTUAL OFFICE

While there are evident benefits to renting virtual office space, there are certain disadvantages that business owners should be aware of. These include the following:

1. **The use of the offices necessitates planning:** Virtual office space is not the same as a coworking space, where firms pay a monthly payment to lease a single table or even a conference hall. If a business wants to hold



- a meeting at the office, it may need to schedule ahead of time to rent or ensure that the conference room is available. This might be challenging if having a site to meet clients on a routine basis is one of the company's main draws.
- 2. **There may be limited services available:** Similarly to how conference rooms are not always accessible, teleconferencing and videoconferencing services may be restricted at any particular moment. Planning ahead is feasible, but it may be difficult in fast-paced enterprises.
- 3. Access might be restricted: It is conceivable that the membership only allows to visit the office on particular days of the week or during specific hours. It is quite usual for virtual workplaces to only provide access during conventional business hours and on weekdays.
- 4. **Working in different places:** Working remotely is not suitable for every organization, especially if it is conducted full-time with no in-office days. Some organizations are more productive in-office if their duties make it impossible to interact virtually, which inhibits employees from getting to know each other well and creating deeper personal relationships. While many organizations are equally as productive (if not more) working remotely than in-office, this may not be true for all organizations.
- 5. **Less cohesion:** Giving a virtual staff the freedom to set their own work hours, business may become more divided. For example, if there is an emergency, such as a significant equipment failure or critical IT troubles, it is difficult to organize a meeting of the whole group to deal with these emergencies.
- 6. Lack of community spirit: Social interaction promotes more efficient teamwork. However, in a virtual workplace, there is not much chance for employees to assemble for unplanned chats, which may frequently improve cooperation.
- 7. **Risk to reputation:** If potential customers learn that the business run a virtual office with remote personnel, they may not consider the company to be "genuine."
- 8. **Security and compliance concerns:** It is exceedingly dangerous in several sectors to keep secret information remotely. For example, in some areas, such as financial services and healthcare, the inadvertent loss or leakage of data might have serious consequences.

2.6 HYBRID OFFICE

A hybrid office is basically a system in which a company's managers and employees work with each other in a physical office at times and remotely at other times. The purpose is to provide employees and employers the perfect blend. A hybrid office, often known as "office + anywhere," may need employees to come in person one to three days each week rather than the conventional five. Alternatively, it may employ a mix of workers who are always remote, workers who are constantly in the office, and workers who

rotate between the two. There are several variants on hybrid work. Some firms may enable every person to work on-site and remotely for a portion of the week. Other businesses may have people that work either full-time remotely or full-time on-site. Others may allow a combination of the two.

It often indicates that employees have the option of working from either the office or virtually. It's "hybrid" in the context that it blends remote and typical in-office work. The exact ratio of days at the office against days away will vary, but a "hybrid office" is one that allows for a mix of where people work. In addition, hybrid offices usually contain different sorts of areas for different types of work. In contrast to a "conventional" office, where each employee has a designated desk, hybrid offices may feature "hot desks," where employees do not have assigned seats and can work anywhere they like on any given day. Hybrid offices may also designate area for various sorts of work under a hybrid work paradigm, employees primarily execute individual tasks at home (or at their preferred remote location) and come into the office for collaborative projects.

Cł	neck Your Progress A:
1.	What is office space?
	THE BEOBLES
	HE PEOPLES
2.	List the features of a virtual office.
3.	How does a virtual office provide flexibility?

Introd	luction	to	Office

4.	Why are hybrid offices termed "hybrid"?

2.7 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN VIRTUAL OFFICE AND PHYSICAL OFFICE

There are various differences between virtual office and physical office which can be understood by the following table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Difference Between Physical Office and Virtual Office

Basis	Virtual Office	Physical Office
Meaning	A virtual office is a business alternative that provides access to a remote working space and office-related activities without the requirement for a permanent office lease.	A physical office is a core work area for everyday duties in a business organization.
Spending	A virtual office is much in comparison to a physical one.	A physical office is costlier as compared to virtual office because it includes many costs such as; monthly rent/bills, equipment and supplies, cleaning fees or daily commute.
Expansion cost	If a company wishes to grow into other areas, a virtual office can assist. Because it may set up a virtual office in another country, the company can have a presence there without actually physically being there.	Physical offices comparatively have greater expansion costs than virtual offices.

Commute time and cost	ľ	It has to spend money as well as time on traveling
Working hours	It provides flexible working hours.	Workings hours are not flexible

2.8 VIRTUAL MEETING SPACE

A virtual meeting room is a type of video conference that resembles the use of a physical meeting room. Team members join the same virtual area via their mobile, laptop, or desktop, and connect with microphones and video cameras, rather than being present in the same physical place. A virtual meeting occurs when individuals from all over the world, regardless of geography, utilize video, audio, and text to connect online. Virtual meetings enable individuals to share knowledge, experiences, and data in real time without having to be physically present in the same room. The following are the types of virtual meetings: Teleconference (just audio), Video conference (with audio and video), and Web conference (audio, video, and content-sharing).

The following are some of the benefits of virtual meetings:

- Time wastage gets minimized.
- Agendas get tighter.
- Cost-cutting measures
- Ease of declining
- Communication directness
- Ability to personalize and level

2.9 WORK FROM HOME (WFH) CULTURE

For many workers today, a world in which interdepartmental messages were actual papers sent from floor to floor is a fantasy confined to historical television dramas and films. The workplace has changed dramatically. The typical 9-to-5 workday that Millennials and Generation X followed is on its way out, as are the days of being limited to a business network in a single office. Companies are broadening their workforce to include bright people wherever they happen to dwell more than ever before. In fact, the number of remote and work-from-home employees has increased by 115% in the previous decade. There are countless additional reasons why working from home is the way of the future. The rising cost of real estate makes it impractical for even huge firms to build offices in various places. Providing



work-from-home options avoids significant investments in terms of both money and people.

So it can be said that work from home indicates that an employee is working from home, an apartment, or another place of residence rather than from the office. Many businesses have a Work from home policy, also known as a remote work policy, that allows their employees to work from home either full-time or whenever it is most suitable for them.

Essentials of work from home culture:

- Include cloud solutions that people may access from any device.
- Everything must be documented and made available to all employees.
- Define jobs and duties precisely.
- Establish explicit performance measures that will be assessed on a regular basis.
- Participate in corporate activities and culture by involving remote employees.

2.9.1 Advantages of Work From Home

Working from home provides various advantages. Some of them are discussed below:

- 1. **Greater independence:** Working from home might give employees with professional autonomy and independence that one may not have in a traditional office. Furthermore, these sorts of professions need self-discipline and drive sufficient to manage time properly and fulfill professional obligations.
- 2. **No commuting to work:** Work-from-home positions allow employees to avoid commuting. They travel less if they work from home one or two days a week.
- 3. **Reduce expenditure:** This advantage has the potential to have a wide ranging impact. For example, by eliminating commuting, one may save money on gas and transportation. Telecommuting can also help save money on things like work clothes, lunches, and even childcare. Saving money on daycare may be especially beneficial for parents who work from home.
- 4. **Enhanced productivity:** Working solo in a peaceful atmosphere may allow employees to be more productive. Increased productivity is related to various other things, including the freedom to roam around the house and take breaks whenever. Being able to take a break from the work when needed might help required to stay motivated and minimize burnout.

- 5. **Improved technical skills:** Telecommuting frequently necessitates the use of technological tools such as online meeting, communication, and team collaboration platforms. Employees can learn technological abilities that would not normally utilize in a physical setting.
- 6. **Enhanced communication abilities:** Working from home necessitates regular contact between teams and management, which will most likely necessitate more emails, phone conversations, video conferences, and messaging platform discussions. Communication abilities will improve using communication tools on a regular basis.
- 7. **Increased work flexibility:** With most telecommuting jobs, there is a lot of freedom. Many work-from-home professions, for example, are unaffected by conventional business hours, making it is simpler to attend life events such as medical checkups. Work-from-home opportunities may be quite beneficial for parents who work irregular schedules to accommodate their family.
- **8. No office distractions:** When employees work from home, there are no workplace distractions. Office noise, such as coworkers conversing, office equipment running, or phones ringing, may be extremely distracting in the workplace. These distractions do not exist in a home office.
- 9. Collaborate across boundaries: Telecommuting can be advantageous for multidivisional corporations with offices all over the world. The capacity to communicate with people from other fields might open up new opportunities for business growth. This might be advantageous to an employee's career since they will be able to work with a wide range of industry specialists from whom they will be able to learn.
- 10. Reduction in work absences: Working from home provides flexibility and can help to decrease work absences. Working from home can minimize the number of days one needs to take off whether they are sick or have an essential appointment.

2.9.2 Disadvantages of Work From Home (WFH)

The disadvantages of work from home are explained as below:

1. **Increased isolation:** Working from home may get extremely isolating if employees spend the most of their time alone, working autonomously. To avoid loneliness and isolation as a remote worker, Planningtrips and activities with friends and family can be helpful. To enhance sociability, several remote organizations have frequent team gatherings.



- 2. **Home office costs:** Some distant locations need the use of specialized equipment, such as headphones, cameras, or software, in order to complete critical activities and projects. Employees should anticipate paying some initial fees to have their home office organized if they want to put up a desk, chair, and other furnishings.
- 3. **Overworking Risks:** Telecommuting also carries the risk of working more hours than necessary. This may undoubtedly result in burnout and increased work-related stress. One may avoid this by carefully establishing their timetable and assigning dedicated periods for work and personal responsibilities. For some people, having a defined workstation that they can leave when the workday is done is essential.
- 4. **Productivity Risks:** Working from home might enhance productivity, but it can also be a difficulty. With the ability to roam around and take breaks whenever one wants, it may be tough to keep focused on the activities he is working on. This can eventually lead to poorer productivity. Implementing productivity tools such as time trackers and task management apps is one method to fight this.
- 5. **At-home distractions:** Distractions such as television, dogs, or domestic tasks may all have an impact on how well employees execute their work. Too many distractions might reduce productivity and motivation. Employees may avoid this by keeping everything distracting in the house to a minimum. To filter out disturbances like traffic and neighborhood activities, using noise-canceling headphones and listen to peaceful music can be helpful.
- 6. **Workplace disconnect:** Telecommuting might occasionally cause a schism between employer and the your employees. Working from home implies they won't have rapid access to essential business procedures until someone in the organization informs them. When they have queries or concerns, they need to make sure to keep in touch with their actual workplace through frequent contact.
- 7. **Unbalanced work-life balance:** Working from home allows employees to combine their family life with the employment, but it may also be difficult to maintain a clear division between the professional and personal lives. Setting clear limits between work and personal time, and explaining these boundaries to everyone in the household may help to get a proper work-life balance.
- 8. **Reduction in face time:** There is less face time as a result of isolation and job separation. Working remotely means employees may not have the same possibilities to interact with coworkers and members of the organization unless they get out and about. To connect with coworkers, the employee may also incorporate more face-to-face interactions into online conferencing systems.

2.10 FUTURE TRENDS IN THE OFFICE ENVIRONMENT

Our world is changing. From shifting sectors and remote work to social upheaval and economic instability, it's time to plan for the future of the company and its most precious asset, its employees. They assisting in the rearchitect work, with human emphasis at the forefront, so one can flourish on, so one can thrive now and for years to come. The contemporary office has its own set of issues. It must enable rising teams who work remotely or across geographical borders, as well as a surge in younger, digitally native employees that have different working preferences than earlier generations. Another element that has disrupted conventional modes of communicating, working, and conducting business is the fast use of digital tools.

Check Your Progress B:

1.	How does work from home increase isolation?
2.	What is a physical office?
	THE PEOPLE'S
	UNIVERSITY
3.	Give examples of few costs involved in a physical office.
4.	What are home office costs?

2.11 LET US SUM UP

Office space basically refers to a building or a part of a building that can be used as an office. Offices come in different shapes, sizes and classes. One may choose the type of office that may suit the specific needs. When it comes to selecting an office space, nowadays business owners and entrepreneurs have a variety of alternatives. They can opt not just traditional office options, but also relatively recent ones, such as co-working spaces and virtual offices.

A virtual office is basically a system that offers a business owner all of the benefits of business space including an office address and phone number, connectivity and administration services, and access to meeting rooms without the requirement for physical office space. Virtual offices are not ideal for every business, but they are a wonderful alternative to explore for smaller firms, freelancers, entrepreneurs, and emerging brands that generally operate remotely but want access to occasional office space and outstanding traditional office advantages.

The most significant advantages of acquiring virtual office space include the following: Flexibility, costs less than hiring a traditional office space, Access to additional services, Established and professional appearance, No maintenance concern, An additional layer of privacy and security, Fixed address with low overhead costs and others. While there are evident benefits to renting virtual office space, there are certain disadvantages that business owners should be aware of. These include the following: The use of the offices necessitates planning, there may be limited services available, access might be restricted, working in different places, less cohesion, lack of community spirit, risk of reputation and others.

A hybrid office is basically a system in which a company's managers and employees work with each other in a physical office at times and remotely at other times. The purpose is to provide employees and employers the perfect blend. It often indicates that employees have the option of working from either the office or virtually. It's "hybrid" in that it blends remote and typical in-office work. The exact ratio of days at the office against days away will vary, but a "hybrid office" is one that allows for a mix of where people work.

A virtual meeting room is a type of video conference that resembles the use of a physical meeting room. Team members join the same virtual area via their mobile, laptop, or desktop, and connect with microphones and video cameras, rather than being present in the same physical place. Some of the benefits of virtual meetings are: Time wastage gets minimized, agendas get tighter, cost-cutting measures, ease of declining, communication directness, ability to personalize and level and make less small conversation.

Work from home indicates that an employee is working from home, an apartment, or another place of residence rather than from the office. Many businesses have a Work from home policy, also known as a remote work policy, that allows their employees to work from home either full-time or whenever it is most suitable for them.



Our world is changing. From shifting sectors and remote work to social upheaval and economic instability, it's time to plan for the future of the company and its most precious asset, its employees. Are assisting in the rearchitect work, with human emphasis at the forefront, so you can flourish on, so you can thrive now and for years to come.

2.12 KEYWORDS

Hybrid Office: A hybrid office is basically a system in which a company's managers and employees work with each other in a physical office at times and remotely at other times.

Office space: It basically refers to a building or a part of a building that can be used as an office. Offices come in different shapes, sizes and classes. One may choose the type of office that may suit the specific needs.

Physical Office: A physical office is a core work area for everyday duties in a business organization.

Virtual Meeting Space: A virtual meeting room is a type of video conference that resembles the use of a physical meeting room.

Virtual Office: A virtual office is basically a system that offers a business owner all of the benefits of business space including an office address and phone number, connectivity and administration services, and access to meeting rooms without the requirement for physical office space.

Work From Home: Work from home indicates that an employee is working from home, an apartment, or another place of residence rather than from the office.

2.13 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1. How is virtual office different from physical office?
- 2. Explain the concept of virtual office.
- 3. While there are evident benefits to renting virtual office space, there are certain disadvantages that business owners should be aware of. List a few of them.
- 4. What is work from home culture?
- 5. What are the advantages of virtual offices?
- 6. Explain the concept of virtual meeting space. What are its various advantages?
- 7. What are the advantages and benefits of work from home?
- 8. Through some light on the future trends in the office environment.

Note: These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.

UNIT 3 OFFICE ETIQUETTE

Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Meaning of Etiquette
- 3.3 What is Office Etiquette?
- 3.4 Need and Importance of Office Etiquette
- 3.5 Do's and Don'ts of Office Etiquette
- 3.6 Case Study on Office Etiquette: Internet Surfing At Work
- 3.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.8 Keywords
- 3.9 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 3.10 Terminal Questions

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the meaning of office;
- explain the meaning of etiquette;
- understand what is meant by office etiquette and its need and importance;
- know the do's and don'ts about office etiquette; and
- develop a deeper understanding of office etiquette through a case study.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

When employees work in an office or other professional setting, etiquette matters. The way in which they present themselves and interact with those around then whether their coworkers, supervisors, or direct reports speaks about them as a person and as a member of the team which can directly influence overall progress and career growth in the organisation. Etiquette is much required in any and all office environments. It often feels like we spend more time at work than home; most of us spend 8 or more hours a day in an office environment. This means that good office etiquette is extremely important. Adhering to office etiquette help coworkers feel comfortable around each other, and it leaves a good impression. All such companies which follow good work policy and mandates its employees about etiquette are bound to achieve success and growth. It helps transform the company culture and brings in development and values. In this unit, we will learn about office etiquette, its need and importance and further develop a deeper understanding of office etiquette through a case study.

3.2 MEANING OF ETIQUETTE

Etiquette is defined as the formal manners and rules that are followed in social or professional settings. One definition of the French word etiquette is "ticket" or "label attached to something for identification." In 16th-century Spain, the French word was borrowed (and altered to "etiqueta") to refer to the written protocols describing orders of precedence and behaviour demanded of those who appeared in court. Eventually, "etiqueta" came to be applied to the court ceremonies themselves as well as the documents which outlined the requirements for them. Interestingly, this then led to French speakers of the time attributing the second sense of "proper behaviour" to their "etiquette," and in the middle of the 18th century English speakers finally adopted both the word and the second meaning from the French.

It is important for an individual to behave in a sensible manner which is acceptable to people around him. The others must not feel embarrassed by behaviour. One should not behave irrationally or illogically in public. Etiquette in simpler words is defined as good behaviour. Human beings are social animals and it is really important for them to behave in an appropriate way. Etiquette refers to behaving in a socially responsible way.

3.3 WHAT IS OFFICE ETIQUETTE?

In every office, there are rules both written and unwritten that serve as the guidelines for employee behaviour. Collectively, this code of customary behaviour is known as office etiquette. Office Etiquette refers to behaving in a sensible and appropriate manner in the office to leave a positive and everlasting impression. It is a code of conduct that governs the expectations of social behaviour in a workplace. This code is put in place to "respect and protect time, people, and processes." There is no universal agreement about standard work etiquette, which may vary from one environment to another. Work etiquette includes a wide range of aspects such as body language, good behaviour, appropriate use of technology, etc. Part of office etiquette is working well with others and communicating effectively.

An inadequate behaviour can challenge others in the workplace. Knowing the rules and etiquettes of working in the office can smoothen the stumbling blocks of daily interaction and management of work.

In simple terms, office etiquette is all about following a piece of advice which is never given by others but is expected to follow, for getting along with other people in an organizational context. So, to be professional, organized and quick to manage people office etiquettes are vital.

3.4 NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF OFFICE ETIQUETTE

Understanding why workplace etiquette matters can go a long way toward ensuring that the employees are doing their part to make the office a respectful and productive place. While it may seem like common sense to



know what is acceptable and unacceptable within an office and put it into practice, office etiquette goes beyond simply following office rules and procedures. Knowing how to treat others with courtesy can help keep the entire office running smoothly. Adhering to the basic rules of office etiquette is crucial to keeping work place a place where everyone feels considered as this can foster a sense of appreciation among coworkers, leading to better overall company culture.

A company culture that is rooted in understanding how to maintain respect through etiquette has numerous benefits. Respecting the way that others communicate, their personal space, and their personal beliefs can help foster a sense of harmony in the office. While one cannot change how others behave, he/she can just have control over their own workplace etiquette. Plus, the behaviour they demonstrate could set a good example for others to follow. It's basically the golden rule: Treat others as you wish to be treated.

Whether an employee is starting a new job or he has been working at the same job for years, it's never too late to check for office etiquette. Having manners around the coworkers and supervisors can make the difference when it's time for promotions or special assignments.

Every office has rules both written and unwritten, that serve as the guidelines for employee behaviour, and it is essential to learn what it is as soon as possible after you start working there. There are certain proper workplace etiquette rules that apply to almost every company, so start with those and add to them as you get a better feel for what is expected.

Maintaining a productive workplace is one of the main benefits of exercising proper office etiquette. If the supervisor has to constantly remind people to be respectful and maintain etiquette, it can have an impact on productivity. Not only do the supervisors have to stop their own work to correct behaviour but they may call meetings to address overall etiquette, which can take away from the time you and your coworkers are actively working. Maintaining etiquette with respect to people's workspaces is another factor that can impact productivity, as an office setting is typically filled with both common spaces and more enclosed, personal spaces such as cubicles or smaller, closed offices. Respecting the way that each of these spaces works can help ensure that people have the space to work productively. This also allows people the opportunity to have places to take breaks and not feel uncomfortable while doing so, and these breaks can lead to more productive work time.

Good etiquette is based on respect and professionalism. That means everyone respects each other's time and space while they focus on the company's goals. This is important because, without good etiquette, conflict can arise that harms the office's productivity. Imagine an office that is a free-for-all. If every employee were allowed to behave the way they saw fit, personalities would clash very quickly. It is bound to happen because everyone has different work styles and living habits. Therefore, guidelines are needed to keep everyone on the same page.

Some office etiquette may be posted in the employee handbook as certain codes of conduct However, many other etiquette norms are unspoken and enforced by a general understanding of all the employees. Violating them may result in serious reprimands from the supervisors and isolation from peers.

Check Your Progress A:

1.	Define the term Etiquette?
2.	"There is no universal agreement about standard work etiquette." Comment.
3.	What are office etiquette?
4.	"A company culture that is rooted in understanding how to maintain respect through etiquette has numerous benefits." Comment.

3.5 DO'S AND DON'TS OF OFFICE ETIQUETTE

Office etiquette is an important part of company culture. Observing and following office etiquette helps in creating a positive and efficient working culture. It also helps in earning a good reputation and further enhance the productivity and overall performance at work.

The various Do's of office etiquettes are following:

- **Reach office on time**: One must adhere to the guidelines and policies of the organisation. Discipline must be maintained at the workplace.
- Reply to colleague's messages in a timely manner: When receiving emails, voice messages, skype messages, texts and other forms of correspondence from colleagues, reply in a timely manner instead of keeping them waiting.
- Be mindful of the body language: Body language speaks volumes in working environments. Talking to colleagues with arms crossed and without making eye contact could be perceived as being rude.
- **Be a team player:** Working well with colleagues and being part of a team will help generate good will amongst the co-workers that is often reciprocated.
- When sick, stay at home: One may be tempted to come to work when he is feeling unwell but if there's a possibility your sickness is contagious, stay at home so that co-workers don't catch the bug.
- Show attentiveness in meetings: When attending meetings, demonstrate attentiveness and alertness by responding to questions and putting forward ideas rather than texting on the phone or playing with the pen!
- **Keep smiling:** A smile a day keeps bad moods at bay! Smiling throughout the day helps generate a pleasant and friendly working environment.
- Praise fellow workers for good work: Part of showing colleagues respect
 it showing appreciation and gratitude for good work. Give praise where
 it's deserved.
- Treat others fairly: An employee may be friendlier with certain coworkers than others, but all members of staff should be treated fairly to prevent favoritism casting a shadow on the office culture.
- Give fellow office workers space and privacy to work: Collaborating and conversing with co-workers is naturally required but respect each other's privacy and give colleagues their own space so they can get on with their job.
- Be mindful of smells, eat your lunch and snacks away from your desk: Nobody wants to work in a smelly environment. Refrain from creating an unnecessarily smelly workplace by eating away from the desk. Eat meals and snacks in the likes of the staff restaurant or in a café down the road.
- Take care of the pitch and tone at the workplace: Never shout on anyone or use foul words. It is unprofessional to lash out at others under pressure. Stay calm and think rationally.

- **Keep your workstation clean and tidy**: Throw unwanted paper in dustbin and keep files in their respective drawers. Put a label on top of each file to avoid unnecessary searching.
- **Keep office attire professional:** Even if a company has culture of wearing jeans and trainers to the office, show respect to clothing conduct by avoiding turning up to work in sandals and Bermuda shorts!
- Pay attention to personal hygiene: Paying attention to personal hygiene will ensure the employee not avoided being sat next to at work.
- Put hand phone in the silent or vibrating mode at the workplace: Loud ring tones are totally unprofessional and also disturb other people.
- **Keep personal belongings confined to a specific space:** Rather than having lipstick, wallet, coat, handbag, mobile phone and diary spread across the office, keep personal belongings in one specific space, so they don't get in the way of others.
- Help maintain the overall tidiness of the whole office: As well as keeping own desk neat and tidy, work together as a team to maintain the tidiness of the whole office, including break out areas, staff kitchens, bathrooms and canteens.
- Be mindful of office furniture: Slouching at the desk with the feet resting on a chair opposite will mean the employee is not presenting himself in the most professional of lights. Sit up straight and be mindful of office furniture.

The various don'ts of office etiquettes are following:

Avoid taking personal calls at your desk: Avoid taking personal calls in office time as it would be disturbing to your fellow colleagues.

Don't interrupt colleagues when they are speaking: Interrupting others is rude and shows a lack of social skills.

Don't be late to work: Being on time to work is a basic office etiquette requirement.

Avoid gossiping about others: Gossip can cripple the atmosphere and culture in an office and should be avoided at all costs.

Refrain from getting too personal with others at work: It might be nice to be friendly with colleagues but getting too personal and paly can show favoritism and an unprofessional tone.

Avoid cursing in the workplace: Using bad language at work is a definite office no-no.

Avoid overdoing the perfume or aftershave: That said, too much perfume or aftershave can create a sickly aroma in a confined office space. Don't infringe the favorite perfume on co-workers too much so that it is all they can smell all day!

Introduction to Office

Never adopt a casual attitude at work: The office pays you for hard work and not for loitering around.

Never ever drink alcohol and smoke while at work: Employees should not go to the office drinking alcohol and smoke only at the smoking zones.

Don't leave tissues lying around: It might sound obvious, but leaving used tissues lying around the office is like giving colleagues an open invitation to germs. Put tissues in the bin.

Avoid being the first one out the door at the end of the day: Rushing out the door as soon as soon as it turns six o'clock can paint a negative light to fellow workers. Staying a few minutes past company closing won't do any harm and will go a long way in showing diligence towards the job.

Seek Permission Avoid Policies- Don't open anyone else's notepads registers or files without his permission

Stay away from nasty politics at the workplace. Avoid playing blame games.

Never wear revealing clothes to work: Body piercing and tattoos are a strict no-no at the workplace. Females should avoid wearing heavy jewelry to work. Don't pass lewd comments to any of fellow workers

Never criticize or make fun of any of colleagues: Remember fighting leads to no solution. There are several other ways to express displeasure. Sit with colleagues, discuss issues face to face and decide on something which is mutually acceptable.

Never attend meetings or seminars without a notepad and pen: It is a little tough to remember each and everything discussed in the meeting. Jot down the important points for future reference. Wait for turn to speak.

No organisation likes to have a shabbily dressed employee: Shave daily and do not use strong perfumes.

While having lunch together, do not start till the others have received their food: Make sure spoon and fork do not make a clattering sound. Eat slowly to avoid burping in public.

Don't peep into other's cubicles and workstations: Knock before entering anyone's cabin. Respect each other's privacy.

Good office etiquette is important because it fosters a respectful environment in the workplace and improves communication between everybody in the office. If one remembers to stay conscious of a coworker's feelings and employ common courtesy, most of the things in this list should eventually come naturally. Avoid committing the usual mistakes, and if done, learn from them.

Check Your Progress B:

State whether the following statements are True or False

- 1. The rules of office etiquette are unique to every organisation. It is therefore important that you understand the rules in your environment in order to succeed.
- 2. You can establish a positive relationship by assuming that other people view the world in the same way that you do.
- 3. Office etiquette is not determined by cultural values but rather by good manners and common courtesies.
- 4. Losing your temper at work shows poor emotional intelligence.
- 5. There is no need to stand up for an introduction if you are already seated.
- 6. Sitting at an angle or facing away from a person during a group discussion, appears rude and indicates that you want to leave.
- 7. Gestures should be used at every opportunity to ensure that you message is clearly related to the person you are talking to.

3.6 CASE STUDY ON OFFICE ETIQUETTES INTERNET SURFING AT WORK

For 24 year old key accounts manager Sumit, the unspoken rules of internet use at his office caused him to be given a warning by his boss.

Sumit told us, "When I started working at the company I was given a large employee handbook. The HR assistant told me that there was nothing unusual in it, so I just signed the slip to say I had read it and thought no more about it."

The employee handbook contained a great deal of information about Sumit's job description, the fire safety rules and all manner of other details that were largely standard. However, as Sumit's previous employer was an online retailer, he had wrongly assumed that their internet usage policy was similar.

He continued, "To be honest, I didn't really give it much thought. I would often surf the net on my lunch break, or send my friends emails. Although I used the internet at my desk every day, it was mainly for work and I didn't use it excessively."

It was this assumption of what constituted 'excessive' that got Sumit into trouble as the internet usage policy as set out in the employee handbook stated that only certain approved sites could be accessed during work hours – not including any retail or email sites - including lunch time.

Sumit explained, "I had worked there for nearly six months when I was called into the HR manager's office for what they called an 'unofficial meeting'. They said that they had been tracking which websites I had been

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using and saw that I often went onto a holiday booking site in work time. I explained that I had been looking to book my summer holiday and was seeing what the latest offers were, although I only did it in my lunch break. They said that this was not acceptable and showed me a list of the 'allowed websites'. When I said that I didn't realize and tried to apologies, they said that as I had signed the employee handbook document I should have known and that I would be given a formal warning!"

Sumit felt as though he was being made an example of as he was the most recent employee to join the company and, he found out later, there had been some problems with other people using the internet in work time already.

He concluded, "I felt very upset by the whole thing as, rather than just let me apologies and learn from the mistake, I felt they were watching me all the time and finding any reason to criticize my performance. Luckily, the HR manager found another job and left a few weeks later and her replacement was far easier to talk to, so my written warning was taken off my file after three months, although I still don't use the internet in work time – and I wait until I get home to book holidays!"

Questions:

- 1. Given the situation, what is wrong with Sumit habits?
- 2. Why was he given a warning by his boss?
- 3. Do you think Sumit's denial reasons can be acceptable?
- 4. What will be the solution to this problem for him?
- 5. According to you, how important it is to go through employee handbooks to know about office etiquette while joining a company and doing the job?

3.7 LET US SUM UP

When employees work in an office or other professional setting, etiquette matters. The way in which they present themselves and interact with those around them whether their coworkers, supervisors, or direct reports speaks about them as a person and as a member of the team which can directly influence overall progress and career growth in the organisation. Etiquette is much required in any and all office environments.

Etiquette is defined as the formal manners and rules that are followed in social or professional settings. One definition of the French word etiquette is "ticket" or "label attached to something for identification." In 16th-century Spain, the French word was borrowed (and altered to "etiqueta") to refer to the written protocols describing orders of precedence and behaviour demanded of those who appeared in court. Eventually, "etiqueta" came to be applied to the court ceremonies themselves as well as the documents which outlined the requirements for them.

In every office, there are rules both written and unwritten that serve as the guidelines for employee behaviour. Collectively, this code of customary behaviour is known as office etiquette. Office Etiquette refers to behaving in a sensible and appropriate manner in the office to leave a positive and everlasting impression. It is a code of conduct that governs the expectations of social behaviour in a workplace.

Understanding why workplace etiquette matters can go a long way toward ensuring that the employees are doing their part to make the office a respectful and productive place. While it may seem like common sense to know what is acceptable and unacceptable within an office and put it into practice, office etiquette goes beyond simply following office rules and procedures. Knowing how to treat others with courtesy can help keep the entire office running smoothly. Adhering to the basic rules of office etiquette is crucial to keeping the workplace a place where everyone feels considered, as this can foster a sense of appreciation among coworkers, leading to better overall company culture.

Office etiquette is an important part of company culture. Observing and following office etiquette help in creating a positive and efficient working culture. It also helps in earning a good reputation and further enhance the productivity and overall performance at work. The various Do's of office etiquette are reach office on time, reply to colleague's messages in a timely manner, be mindful of your body language, be a team player, when sick, stay at home, show attentiveness in meetings, put your handphone in the silent or vibrating mode at the workplace, keep your personal belongings confined to a specific space, help maintain the overall tidiness of the whole office, be mindful of office furniture etc. Whereas, the various Don'ts of office etiquettes are avoid taking personal calls at your desk, don't interrupt colleagues when they are speaking, don't be late to work, avoid gossiping about others, refrain from getting too personal with others at work, avoid cursing in the workplace, never attend meetings or seminars without a notepad and pen, while having lunch together, do not start till the others have received their food, don't peep into other's cubicles and workstations etc.

3.8 KEYWORDS

Behavior: Behaviour is the way in which one acts or conducts oneself, especially towards others.

Company: A company is a business organization that makes money by selling goods or services.

Co-worker: A co-worker is any person with whom one works, typically someone in a similar role or at a similar level within an organisation.

Employee: An employee is a person who is paid to work for an organisation.



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Etiquette: Etiquettes are the customary code of polite behavior in society or among members of a particular profession or group.

Manner: Manner is the usual way in which you behave toward other people, or the way you behave on a particular occasion

Office: An office is a room, set of rooms, or building used as a place for commercial, professional, or bureaucratic work.

Rules: Rules are the accepted principle or instruction that states the way things are or should be done, and tells you what you are allowed or are not allowed to do.

3.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress B:

- 1. True
- 2. False
- 3. False
- 4. True
- 5. False
- 6. True
- 7. True

3.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1. What is meant by office etiquette?
- 2. Why should you follow office etiquette?
- 3. List ten do's and don'ts for office etiquette.
- 4. Does every company require the same set of office etiquette to be followed? Explain it with suitable examples.
- 5. How do office environments change? Does this have any specific implication for office etiquette? Substantiate your answer with suitable examples.

Note: These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.

BLOCK 2 OFFICE ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

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BLOCK 2 OFFICE ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

This is the second block of the course "Office Management and Secretarial Practices". This block will accustome the learners with various aspects related to office organization and office management, various skills and qualities required to be a good office manager as well as various roles, functions and duties performed by an office manager. This block is structured to cover the fundamentals and preliminary aspects of organization and management of offices. The block on the theme "Office Organization and Management" comprises of three units, the detail of which is as mentioned below:

Unit 4: Discusses about the various facets of organization such as its concept, meaning and importance in an enterprise and its various types etc. The later part of the unit talks about the concept of centralization, decentralization along with their respective advantages and disadvantages, differentiation between centralization, decentralization and delegation as well as their usefulness and suitability in an office organization.

Unit 5: Makes the learners aware about various important aspects related to office management in terms of its objectives, importance and various functions such as planning, organizing, controlling and coordination. The unit also emphasizes how office management is important in achieving organization's goals through optimum utilization of office resources and cost reduction.

Unit 6: Discusses the various roles, qualities and duties of an office manager in an office organization. Office managers are in charge of the office and are required to perform various functions efficiently to help organizations achieve their goals. The later part of the unit discusses the various managerial skills required and functions of an office manager.

UNIT 4 ORGANISING AN OFFICE

Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Office Organization
 - 4.2.1 Importance of Office Organization
- 4.3 Forms and Types of Organizations
 - 4.3.1 Line Organization
 - 4.3.1.1 Advantages of Line Organization
 - 4.3.1.2 Disadvantages of Line Organization
 - 4.3.2 Functional Organization
 - 4.3.2.1 Advantages of Functional Organization
 - 4.3.2.2 Disadvantages of Functional Organization
 - 4.3.3 Line and Staff Organization
 - 4.3.3.1 Advantages of Line and Staff Organization
 - 4.3.3.2 Disadvantages of Line and Staff Organization
 - 4.3.4 Committee Organization
 - 4.3.4.1 Advantages of Committee
 - 4.3.4.2 Disadvantages of Committee
- 4.4 Centralization and Decentralization
 - 4.4.1 Measuring the Degree of Decentralization in an Office
 - 4.4.2 Advantages of Centralization
 - 4.4.3 Disadvantages of Centralization
 - 4.4.4 Advantages of Decentralization
 - 4.4.5 Disadvantages of Decentralization
 - 4.4.6 Factors Affecting Decentralization
 - 4.4.7 Difference Between Delegation and Decentralization
 - 4.4.8 Difference Between Centralization and Decentralization
- 4.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.6 Keywords
- 4.7 Terminal Questions

4.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- describe the term office organization;
- understand the meaning and importance of office organization in an enterprise;
- explain various forms and types of organizations;

- differentiate between centralization and decentralization; and
- differentiate between decentralization and delegation.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Organization is essential for any group activity. We spend majority part of our lives in organizations. Organizing is one of the important functions of office management. Once the managers decide the office objectives, next logical step is to give a practical shape to the activities needed to accomplish these objectives. In organizing, various activities required to be performed are determined, similar activities are grouped together and then these manageable group activities are allocated to individuals. Authority commensurate to responsibilities is also accorded to individuals. Though, individuals perform diverse functions, yet effective organization provides for integration of these diverse efforts. Organization is akin to human body. As different systems (such as respiratory system, nervous circulatory system, digestive system, etc.) have been assigned diverse functions in human body but all these systems function in a coordinated manner, in a similar fashion, an office may have different departments or divisions or functions but all should work in an integrated manner to run the organization smoothly.

In this unit-4, we will learn about the various facets of office organization. First, we will discuss about what does office organization mean and what is the importance of office organization in an enterprise. You will further learn about various forms and types of organizations. In concluding section, concept related to centralization and decentralization has been explained. You will also learn about difference between centralization and decentralization and decentralization in this section.

4.2 OFFICE ORGANIZATION

Different authors have defined term organization differently. Also, term organization is used in two ways. First, it has been defined as the organizing function of office management process and second, it has been defined as a network of interrelationships of individuals and jobs called organization structure. Organization structure is the result of organizing activity or process. Organization is the tool with which office managers put plans in to action.

"Organization is the process of combining the work which individuals or groups have to perform with the facilities necessary for its execution, that the duties so performed provide the best channels for the effective systematic, positive and coordinated application of the available effort' – Oliver Sheldon

According to Davis, "Organization is a group of people, who are cooperating under the direction of leadership for the accomplishment of common end".

As per Terry, "Organization is the establishing of effective behavioral relationships among persons so that they may work together efficiently and gain personnel satisfaction in doing selected tasks under given environmental conditions for the purpose of achieving some goal or objective."

Koontz and O'Donnell defined organization as "the structural relationship by which an enterprise is bound together and the framework in which individual effort is coordinated."

Thus, organizing is the process of arranging and structuring of organizational work specialy a work related to office to accomplish organization's goals and organizational structure exhibits formal arrangement of jobs within an organization. Therefore, formal organization is a deliberate coordination of people in the organization to combine their efforts for common causes. Organizing process involves determining the nature of tasks, grouping these tasks as per similarity in nature, assigning authority to do these tasks and integrating the diverse tasks. Organization is the structural framework, which provides for integration and interrelations of tasks.

As there are diverse activities being performed by large number of individuals in an office of any organization, it is essential to harmonize the work of these individuals in order to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in office operations. Higher the number of people working in office, more is the need for office organization for a smooth functioning of office.

As per Leffing well, "a well-organized office makes it possible for the management to plan its operations intelligently, to put its plan into effect surely, to follow their progress currently, to determine their effectiveness promptly, to appraise the results without delay and to coordinate all the activities of the business."

Thus, office organization is the process of collecting and safeguarding useful information from internal and external sources, effectively coordinating various office resources to achieve office goals by maintaining harmonious relations between work and employees with a view to regularly monitoring progress for earning higher profits. Office organization process involves decisions about following key aspects:

- 1) Work specialization: It is the process of dividing work activities into separate job tasks.
- 2) Chain of command: It is the continuous line of authority extending from top to bottom of the organization. It clarifies the reporting relationships.
- **3) Departmentalization:** It refers to the basis used for jobs grouping to make departments.
- **4) Span of control:** It is the number of employees who can be effectively and efficiently supervised by a manager.



- 5) Centralization and decentralization: It refer to degree of dispersal of decision-making authority across different levels of organization.
- **6) Formalization:** It is the extent to which jobs are standardized and the rules and procedures are enforced in the organization.

4.2.1 Importance of Office Organization

- 1) Achievement of Office Objectives: A good office organization helps in proper coordination of all activities of the organization, which ultimately helps in achievement of objectives.
- **2) Reduces Conflicts:** A good office organization establishes clear authority and responsibility relationships in the office. Each employee knows what is expected from him/her and interdependence of jobs is minimum. All this helps in reducing conflicts in office.
- 3) Minimum Duplication of Efforts: In a good organization, utmost care is taken to ensure that no essential activity is left out and no activity is duplicated. Overlapping and duplication of work is reduced due to clear identification and assignment of activities.
- 4) Optimum utilization of Office Resources: Good Organization structure helps in optimum utilization of resources by allocating them to the points where they are most needed. A good organization makes employees know their authority and responsibilities in unambiguous manner leading to optimum utilization of human resources. It helps in putting right person at right place. It ensures smooth flow in office operations by avoiding bottlenecks, reducing idle time and reallocating idle machines. It helps in effective administration.
- 5) Facilitates Growth: Sound organization facilitates efficient management, which results in growth and expansion of office.
- 6) Effective Communication: Good structure establishes clear lines of communication in office. It ensures effective communication inside office as well with the other constituents of the organization. Clear lines of communication along the flow of authority make internal communication unambiguous. Organization structure also provides pathways for external communication.
- 7) Facilitates Delegation and Decentralization: Good office organization reduces the workload of senior managers by facilitating delegation and decentralization of authority. This leaves more time to managers for effective planning and good policymaking.

4.3 FORMS AND TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS

In offices, task allocation, work division, delegation of authority, span of control and distribution of authority can be done in several ways. Thus, several different organization structures have evolved as the result of such decisions. Each one of these has distinct characteristics, advantages, and



disadvantages. No one is better than the others rather suitability of a structure is dependent on the need of the office. Four main types of office organizations are:

- 1. Line organization
- 2. Functional organization
- 3. Line and Staff organization
- 4. Committee organization

4.3.1 Line organization

Line organization is the oldest and simplest type of organization. In this organization, line of authority or line of command flows from top to bottom. This line of authority is unbroken and vertical. As per J. M. Lundy, "Line organization is characterized by direct lines of authority flowing from the top to the bottom of the organizational hierarchy and lines of responsibility flowing in an opposite but equally direct manner." This organization is also called as scalar organization due to this scalar chain of command. In this organization, communication flow is along the lines of command. Every person is superior to all the persons below him and is responsible for their conduct. He himself is accountable to his superior. This is a vertical structure where every superior delegates authority to his subordinates. Authority flows downward and is delegated to all the persons responsible for the execution of work. On the other hand, responsibility flows upwards. Line organization is either Pure Line Organization or Departmental Line Organization. The various features of line organization are following:

- 1. It is one of the simplest forms of organization.
- 2. Line of authority flows vertically from top to bottom.
- 3. Specialized and supportive services are absent in this type of organization.
- 4. Line officers can maintain unity of command and unified control.
- 5. Line officers take independent decisions in their respective areas.
- 6. Authority and responsibility for each position are clear.
- 7. Efficient communication flow.
- 8. Brings stability to office.

4.3.1.1 Advantages of Line Organization

Various advantages of line organization are following:

- 1) Simplicity: Line organization is the simplest organization to establish and understand. Everyone knows whom to report and who will be reporting to him. Each employee has only one boss.
- 2) Clearly identified authority and responsibility: In line organization, authority and responsibilities associated with a particular job position are clearly defined. Authority should be commensurate to the work assigned.

- 3) Better co-ordination, control and supervision: Line authority inherent in line managers makes them overall in-charge of the department. This hierarchical arrangement helps in achieving effective co-ordination as the manager being in charge can direct, supervise and control all the activities of his subordinates. In addition, number of subordinates under one supervisor are lesser in line organization.
- **4) Effective communication:** As communication flow is along the chain of command, there is always a direct link between the superior and subordinates leading to effective communication.
- **5) Economical:** As there are no specialists hired in line organization to advise line managers, cost of operating such organization is substantially less.
- 6) Quick decisions: Line manager is the only in-charge of the department. He has to make all decisions by himself, as he has no staff specialists to advise him. Non-availability of specialists for consultation fastens the decision-making process.
- 7) Unity of command: Line organization operates in accordance to principle of scalar chain, where each employee is in command of only one superior. Unity of command ensures clear instructions to the employees.
- 8) Executive development: Line managers are responsible for making and executing all types of decisions related to their division. This helps them in learning variety of tasks and develops their capabilities.
- 9) Flexibility: Line organization are flexible as line manager is responsible for all important decisions. He can easily accommodate any changes, if situation warrants.

4.3.1.2 Disadvantages of Line Organization

Various advantages of line organization are following:

- 1) Over reliance on line managers: Line organizations are too much dependent on the line managers. Line organizations are only as good as the decisions of the line executives.
- 2) Excess work for managers: As line managers are expected to discharge all the duties of their departments single handedly, they are always overburdened. This workload increases with expansion of the offices leaving little time to them for important work.
- 3) Lack of expertise: A line organization does not have staff to advise them on important matters. Line managers take decisions with regard to every aspect of their division but as they cannot be experts in each aspect of the office, quality of decisions may suffer.

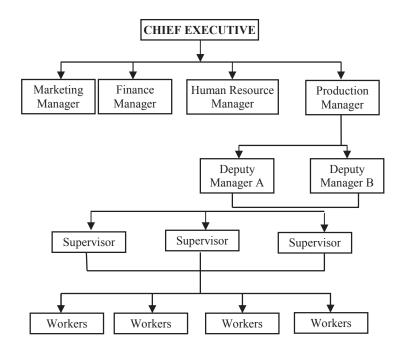


Figure 4.1: Line organization structure

- 4) Scope of nepotism: In line organization, there is ample scope for nepotism or favoritism as managers allocate work according to their whims, preferences, relationship or friendship and not merit exclusively. It is quite possible that performance of subordinates may not be evaluated objectively and favors may be given to undeserving persons.
- 5) Authoritative leadership: Line organization may lead to autocratic leadership and monopoly tendencies in managers. Managers may take decisions in an arbitrary manner and may misuse their authority. This can be damaging to the organization.
- 6) Lack of initiative: In line organization, subordinates may lack initiative in giving any creative and innovative solutions to problems as they lack any authority in decision-making.
- 7) Instability: In line organization, performance of office is dependent on few key individuals. If these individuals leave office on any account, it may lead to instability in office. Also, as lower level employees are not so involved in decision making, there is a problem of succession.
- **8) Inflexibility:** Line organization may turn rigid and inflexible if rules and regulations are enforced too rigorously that they can rarely change.
- **9) Problems of co-ordination:** As different departmental heads have authority to run their departments, there may arise problem of co-ordination among various departments.

4.3.2 Functional organization

F W Taylor advocated that functional authority not the departmental authority should direct departmental work. He also felt that it is unwise to overload line manager with all the responsibilities of the department. Functional organization is based on the concept of functional Authority of

managers. In functional organization, each employee instead of receiving orders form one supervisor/line manager receives order from a group of specialist supervisors, each of whom is an expert in a particular domain/area/function.

The following diagram shows the functional organisation at the top levels.

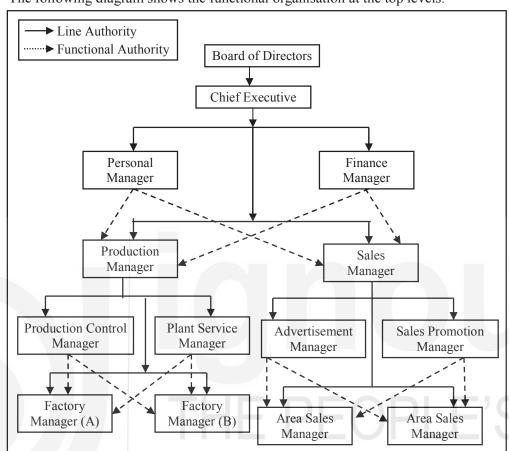


Figure 4.2: Functional organization structure

In functional organization, entire work in the organization is divided in various departments. Similar type of work is put under the control of a departmental manager, also called functional manager *viz.* records manger, service manager, statistics manager etc. These functional managers are then responsible for carrying out various activities of their respective functional area/departments wherever these are performed in the organization. For example, maintenance manager will be responsible for all the maintenance related work in entire organization and human resources manager will be responsible for all personnel related matters throughout the organization. Thus, a subordinate anywhere in the organization will receive commands directly from various functional managers. The various features of functional organization are following:

- Total work of organization is divided into specialized functions.
- Each function is to be performed by a functional expert.
- Functional manger/ functional in charge has the authority over all the employees throughout the organization for his functional area.
- Functional specialists have considerable independence in their functional domain.

4.3.2.1 Advantages of Functional Organization

- 1) **Benefits of specialization:** Functional organization can benefit immensely from the specialized advice of functional experts as they provide the guidance to the employees throughout organization.
- **2) Enhanced efficiency:** This type of organization ensures enhanced efficiency as the workers operate under the expert and competent personnel and perform limited operations.
- 3) Limited duties: Managers are not overburdened in functional organization as they cater to only their area of expertise and are not discharging all the duties as in line organization.
- 4) Scope for growth: Scope for growth and expansion is more in functional organization as functional managers employed at various levels of organization help the organization to grow as per the need.
- 5) Flexibility: Functional organization is flexible as it allows changes in the organization without affecting the performance of the organization in a big way. A function from lower levels in a department can be removed easily without much impact on the performance of same function in other departments.
- 6) Relief to top executives: Unlike line organization, managers are not burdened in functional organization, as experts are there to help in taking decision in specific functional areas.
- 7) **Economy of operations:** Employment of specialists help in controlling wasteful activities and ensures optimum utilization of human and other resources like office accommodation, equipments and machines, etc.
- **8) Better supervision:** Functional managers, being expert, have better planning and execution skills in their area of expertise. They are also able to provide improved level of supervision.

4.3.2.2 Disadvantages of Functional Organization

- 1) No Unity of Command: Functional organization violates the principle of 'unity of command'. In this organization, a subordinate receives instructions from multiple bosses. These bosses may put pressure on the worker to give priority to work pertaining to their functional domain. This leads to conflict and confusion in the mind of the subordinate as to whom to obey and whom to ignore.
- **2) Expensive:** Hiring of multiple functional experts for managing various functions is a must in functional organization. This increases the overhead expenditure of the organization due to higher remuneration of the experts. Small organizations may find it financially unviable to have so many experts.
- 3) Difficulty in Fixing Responsibility: Absence of unity of command makes it difficult to fix responsibility for any slackness in work.



- Subordinates may engage in blame game and a tendency to shirk responsibility may arise in the organization.
- 4) Lack of Co-Ordination: There may arise the problem of coordination among different functional experts especially whenever a decision is to be made after consulting several specialists. Specialists may try to give more importance to their work and this results in conflicts among specialists.
- 5) Slacked Discipline: Absence of unity of command and direction in functional organization leads to problem of discipline among workers and lower-level supervisors.

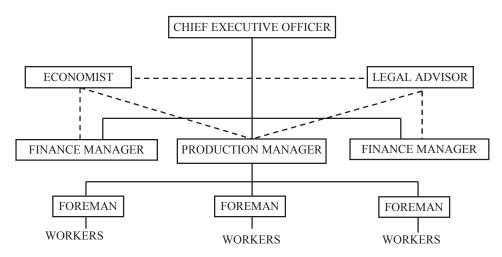
4.3.3 Line and Staff Organization

Line organization is characterized by concentration of authority and control in line managers and functional organization is characterized by splitting authority into various functional managers and having lose control over subordinates. In order to overcome the shortcomings of line organization and functional organization, line and staff organization has been proposed. In line and staff organization, line managers have line authority over the subordinates and they get the advice of the staff specialists whenever needed. Staff is in an advisory role in organization and line managers take final decisions. Staff officers help line managers in solving problems effectively. Personal secretary to chief executive officer is a staff official. Staff is of three types:

- **a) Personal Staff:** includes personal assistants and secretaries to CEO, MD, GM, managers etc. Personal staff gives advice and assistance to line managers and is attached to line managers.
- **b)** Specialized Staff: such as lawyers, chartered accountants possess specialized knowledge and give specialized services to organization.
- **c) General Staff:** comprises of various experts rendering valuable advice to the top management on different matters.

The various features of line and staff organizations are following:

- 1. Line and staff organization is a combination of line organization and staff organization so as to reap benefits of both.
- 2. Line and staff organization is more complex than pure line organization.
- 3. Availability of expert advice on important matters makes line and staff organization more efficient.
- 4. Staff specialists are attached to different functional areas.
- 5. Two lines of authority, line authority and staff authority, flow in organization at any given point.
- 6. Division of work and specialization. Takes place in line and staff organisation.
- 7. Staff is only in advisory capacity and line manages retain the command authority over subordinates.



Note: Straight lines represent line and broken lines represent staff.

Figure 4.3: Line and Staff organization structure

4.3.3.1 Advantages of Line and Staff Organization

- 1) **Better Decisions:** Presence of specialists facilitates line managers with expert knowledge which help in taking better decisions for the benefit of organization.
- 2) Relief to Line Managers: Presence of staff managers provides much relief to line managers. Line managers can concentrate on routine and administrative matters and execution of plans, whereas staff tackles with technical and specialized work.
- 3) Better Management: Division of line authority and functional authority ensures that line and functional managers concentrate and focus on the work in their own area.
- 4) Flexibility: This organization is relatively more flexible than other organizations. More staff can be added as per the need of the organization without disturbing line authority. Also, stability of organization is not dependent on few top line managers.
- 5) Advancement of research: Experts in the organization can undertake research and development work for betterment of organization such as through product improvements, by introducing improved methods of doing work or by introducing economical means of production.
- 6) Training of Managers: Availability of expert advice of staff proves to be an excellent training ground for Line managers. Young staff managers also learn and acquire more expertise in their respective areas.

4.3.3.2 Disadvantages of Line and Staff Organization

1) Conflict between line and staff: Conflict between Line and staff officials is the main problem of this organization. Staff managers always complain that their advices are not properly implemented. On the other hand, line managers complain that staff does not give sound advice, as the ultimate responsibility of doing work is for line. Line also accuses

- staff of taking credit for success and blaming line for any failures. Conflicts are also due to the age differences. Staff is generally young experts and line managers are elder to them. Line managers may have ego problems in taking advice from someone much younger to them.
- **2) Expensive:** This organization may prove to be costly for smaller firms as it is expensive to hire specialists due to their high remuneration.
- 3) Confusion over line and staff authority: In this organization, line and staff authorities are flowing simultaneously, which may confuse the workers as to whom they should obey. Also, line managers may consider themselves superior to staff to which they may object. This may pose hurdle in effective functioning of the organization.
- 4) Lack of sound advice from staff: Staff specialists may not give sound advice, as they are not accountable for the outcome. At times, over reliance on staff may also prove fatal as staff managers may give wrong advice. They may be ineffective due to lack of command authority.
- 5) Dissatisfaction among line managers: In line and staff organization, Staff may steal the show for higher returns. This may leave line managers dissatisfied.

4.3.4 Committee organization

In committee form of organization, a group of managers come together to discuss a problem, decide a course of action and then recommend solutions to line managers. Problems discussed in committee are possibly those which cannot be solved by an individual. Hence, committees are constituted to get better insights and better solutions to the problem. Committees work on the principles of collective thinking, participative management, integration of ideas, democratic management, corporate judgment and common decision. A committee is not a separate type of organization but a way of assigning a group of competent persons to line departments for advice and guidance within some type of organization structure as discussed above.

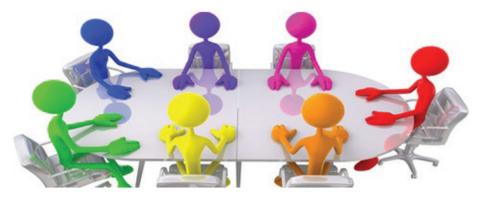


Figure 4.4: Committee organization structure

Committees are generally used in large complex organizations to solve complex multifaceted problems effectively. In a committee, competent, experienced experts exchange ideas. In addition, opinions of the committee members are pooled together through discussions to take common decisions.

For example, purchase committee will finalize the purchase requirements of each department. Committees provide a platform for exchanging ideas, for generating solutions, and for developing organizational policies. Committees can be standing or permanent, ad hoc or temporary, executive or advisory, and formal or informal.

4.3.4.1 Advantages of Committee

The various advantages of Committee are following:

- 1) Pooling of diverse opinions: As the committee members are from diverse areas of expertise, problem can be discussed in a multifaceted manner. Mangers with varied abilities have different viewpoints and values and are able to highlight multiple aspects of the problem. Pooling of diverse opinions may help in making a realistic estimate of the problem.
- 2) Better co-ordination: Deliberations and discussions among different department heads lead to better co-ordination among different departments as such discussions lead to better understanding of the difficulties faced by other departments.
- **3) Balanced views:** Committee deliberations lead to balanced view of the problem at hand. Committee decisions are based on common agreement among members for the solution. Such common view curbs the tendency of any department head to over emphasize his agenda by ignoring the genuine demands of other departments.
- 4) Motivation: Committees are composed of senior as well as junior managers. Junior managers may get motivated due to the recognition and opportunity to be a part of decision-making. It may lead to high morale and improved performance of the subordinates.
- 5) Dispersion of power: Committees make use of splintered authority. A single manager cannot take decisions that are taken by committees as no manager is authorized to make strategically important decisions single handedly. Such dispersal of authority saves organizations from misuse of authority.
- 6) Better acceptance of decisions: Generally, senior managers such as department heads are the members of the committees and committees' decisions are taken in wider perspective of organization. Hence, the probability of acceptance of committee decisions is higher than the decisions taken by any individual manager.
- 7) Better communication: Committee members can share the background of committee decisions as well as the correct information about the decisions with other members of the organization leading to better communication and acceptance of the decisions.

8) Executive training: Committees prove to be a good platform for executive training. Executives participate in committee deliberations and through that learn interpersonal behavior, communication, teamwork, cooperation, negotiations and group dynamics. In addition, they learn to understand and solve office problems in a multifaceted manner and learn the process of decision-making.

4.3.4.2 Disadvantages of Committee

Various disadvantages of committee are following:

- 1) Delay in decision-making: This perhaps is the main drawback of committee form of organization. In committees, members take decisions after much deliberation. Meeting has to be fixed as per the suitability and availability of all the members. Agenda of the meeting is issued to all members well in time. After that, members come and discuss the matter. This entire process takes lot of time and decisions are delayed and may lead to loss of opportunities.
- 2) Expensive: Holding committee meetings is expensive as arrangements have to be done for holding meetings. A large sum of money is needed to pay for refreshments, conveyance, daily allowances etc.
- 3) Compromised decisions: Generally, committee decisions are taken through consensus. In order to reach consensus, committee may resort to policy of compromise to reach unanimity. In such a scenario, committee decision may be less than optimal and only an acceptable decision.
- 4) No accountability of decisions: Committee decisions being group decisions, accountability for wrong or sub optimum decisions cannot be fixed. Thus, committees may lead to inefficiency in organizations.
- 5) Domination by minority: When the committee decisions are to be taken unanimously, some dissenting individuals try to push their agenda and force committee to take compromised decisions. In addition, at times, vocal members try to dominate committee deliberations and ignore the viewpoint of other members. Such acts may leave other members frustrated and discontented. Such decision will not be in the best interest of the organization.
- 6) Limited effectiveness: Committees are not effective always and thus their role is limited in organizations. Whenever, there is a need to make quick decisions, committees prove ineffective. In addition, for routine decisions, committees are ineffective. Committees are most effective in dealing with strategically important matters, inter personal departmental situations and grievance redressal.
- 7) **Misuse of Committees:** At times, committees are formed just to avoid action or delay an action.
 - Not every organization is suitable to all the offices. The choice of the organization is dependent on nature and size of office, period of

establishment, continuity of workflow, geographical dispersion and staff strength and degree of mechanization.

Check Your Progress A

1.	Define office organization. Describe the two ways of defining organization.
2.	Enumerate the key elements of office organization.
3.	Describe the features of Line and Staff organization.
	THE PEOPLE'S
1	Committees and its analysis of the contraction in t
4.	Committees provide a platform for exchanging ideas". Comment.

4.4 CENTRALIZATION AND DECENTRALIZATION

Concept of centralization and decentralization is related to diffusion of decision-making authority in the offices. These terms are opposite to each other. Centralization of authority implies concentration of decision-making at top levels of office. It refers to the concentration of powers at higher levels of management. On the other hand, decentralization is the diffusion of decision-making powers to middle and lower levels of management or the degree to which middle and lower-level employees have their say in

decision- making or actually make decisions. Giving more authority to employees to make decisions empowers them.

Allen defines "Centralization as systematic and consistent reservation of authority at central points within an organization. Decentralization applies to the systematic delegation of authority in an organization wide context."

4.4.1 Measuring the Degree of Decentralization in an office

Different offices may have varying degrees of decentralization. As per Ernest Dale, following criteria can be used to measure degree of decentralization in an office:

- 1. More number of decisions made at lower levels, higher the degree of decentralization
- 2. More important decisions made at lower levels, higher the degree of decentralization
- 3. More the effect of decisions made at lower levels on other functions in office, higher the degree of decentralization
- 4. Lesser the checking of decisions made at lower levels, higher the degree of decentralization

4.4.2 Advantages of Centralization

The various advantages of centralization are following:

- 1. Centralization leads to better utilization of talents of top leaders.
- 2. Centralization acts as a unifying force in the office. It ensures all departments move together and all operations are integrated.
- 3. Centralization ensures strong coordinated team at top level.
- 4. Centralization ensures that uniform plans and policies are implemented in office.
- 5. Centralization is best suitable in emergencies as it helps in faster decision-making.
- 6. Duplication of functions and facilities is least in centralization.

4.4.3 Disadvantages of Centralization

The various disadvantages of centralization are following:

- 1. Decision-making and communication flow is slow in centralized offices.
- 2. There are always chances of abuse of power and authority in centralized offices by corrupt officers.
- 3. Centralization restricts development of subordinates and does not prepare them for higher positions in offices.
- 4. It leads to low motivation and morale of employees as they do not enjoy autonomy under centralization.

5. Future of office depends upon decision-making capabilities of top executives.

4.4.4 Advantages of Decentralization

The various advantages of decentralization are as follows:

- 1. Decentralization relieves top executives of their workload by shifting routine decision making to lower executives.
- 2. Decentralization enhances job satisfaction and motivation of subordinates by giving them autonomy and chances for participation in decision-making.
- 3. Decentralization facilitates faster and accurate decisions nearest to the point of action.
- 4. Decentralization helps growth and diversification of office by giving autonomy for innovation and creativity.
- 5. Decentralization gives subordinates opportunities to exercise their judgment, which leads to executive development.
- 6. Decentralization means wider span of control and lesser layers of management through which communication has to travel. Thus, there are lesser chances of distortion of communication.

4.4.5 Disadvantages of Decentralization

The various disadvantages of decentralization are as follows:

- Decentralization increases administrative expenses due to duplication of functions and underutilization of physical facilities.
- 2. Decentralization gives autonomy to different divisions or departments. This may lead to difficulty in cooperation among various units.
- 3. Due to decentralization, different departments may implement policies and programs inconsistent to each other.
- 4. Decentralization is not possible if office lacks competent personnel.
- 5. External constraints such as market uncertainties, resource constraints, and government policies may create barriers to decentralization.

4.4.6 Factors Affecting Decentralization

The various factors affecting decentralization are as follows:

- 1) Size and complexity of the office: In bigger and complex offices, there is a greater need for decentralization.
- 2) Physical dispersal of operations: More geographically dispersed the physical facilities/ operations of office, greater is the need for decentralization.

- **Degree of diversification in office activities:** More diversified the work in the office, more is the need for decentralization.
- 4) **History of the office:** Offices, which have grown through diversification and amalgamations, are more likely to be decentralized.
- 5) Availability of competent staff: If lower-level staff in office is competent, then it is advisable to have decentralization in office.
- **6) Philosophy of top management:** If top management believes in individual's freedom and capability, offices need to be decentralized.
- 7) Effective planning, control and communication system: Existence of sound planning, communication and control system in the organizations support decentralization.
- **8)** External environment: When external conditions are uncertain and unfavorable, then high degree of freedom can be fatal to the office as resources need to be optimally utilized.

4.4.7 Difference between Delegation and Decentralization

Table 4.1: Difference between Delegation and Decentralization

Delegation	Decentralization
Delegation is a process.	Decentralization is outcome of delegation.
It is necessary for management.	It is discretionary and depends upon the top management.
It is a technique of management.	It is both- a philosophy as well as a technique of management.
Delegation is the relationship between superior and subordinate.	Decentralization is relationship between top management and various departments.
Delegation is possible without decentralization.	Decentralization is not possible without Delegation.
Delegator can exercise control over subordinates.	Control is delegated to departmental heads.
Delegation supports decision- making in a superior –subordinate relationship in the office.	Decentralization results in diffusion of decision-making authority throughout office.

4.4.8 Difference between Centralization and Decentralization

Table 4.2: Difference between Centralization and Decentralization

Basis	Centralization	Decentralization
Definition	Centralization is retention of authority for planning and decision –making with the top management.	Decentralization is dispersal of authority to various levels of management.
Involves	Methodical reservation of authority.	Methodical dispersal of authority.
Flow of Communication	Vertical (Mostly downward)	Free Flow
Pace of Decision- Making	Slow	Relatively fast
Benefits	Proper coordination and Leadership	Sharing of burden and responsibility
Decision – making authority	Top management	Multiple positions in all three levels of management
Implemented when	Inadequate control over the organization	Considerable control over the organization
Suitability	Small organizations	Big organizations

Centralization and decentralization are used relative to each other. Absolute centralization or decentralization is neither practical nor feasible in any office. Thus, managers always seek a judicious blend of both as per the need of the office. This blending of centralization and decentralization has an impact on organization structure of office and makes these different from office to office.

Check Your Progress B

1.	Differentiate between Centralization and Decentralization.
2.	Distinguish between Delegation and Decentralization.

Offi	ce Orgar	nization
and	Manage	ment

3.	List the factors that favor decentralization of authority in an office.
4.	What criteria is used to measure degree of decentralization in an office?

4.5 LET US SUM UP

Organization is essential for any group activity. We spend majority part of our lives in organizations. Organizing is one of the important functions of office management. Once the managers decide the office objectives, next logical step is to give a practical shape to the activities needed to accomplish these objectives. In organizing, various activities required to be performed are determined, similar activities are grouped together and then these manageable group activities are allocated to individuals.

Different authors have defined term organization differently. Also, term organization is used in two ways. First, it has been defined as the organizing function of office management process and second, it has been defined as a network of interrelationships of individuals and jobs called organization structure. Organization structure is the result of organizing activity or process. Organization is the tool with which office managers put plans in to action. Office Organization process involves decisions about work specialization, chain of command, departmentalization, span of control, centralization and decentralization, and formalization etc.

In offices, task allocation, work division, delegation of authority, span of control and distribution of authority can be done in several ways. Thus, several different organization structures have evolved as the result of such decisions. Each one of these has distinct characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages. No one is better than the others rather suitability of a structure is dependent on the need of the office. Four main types of office organizations are line organization, functional organization, line and staff organization, and committee organization.

Concept of centralization and decentralization is related to diffusion of decision-making authority in the offices. These terms are opposite to each other. Centralization of authority implies concentration of decision-making at top levels of office. It refers to the concentration of powers at higher levels

of management. On the other hand, decentralization is the diffusion of decision-making powers to middle and lower levels of management or the degree to which middle and lower-level employees have their say in decision- making or actually make decisions. Giving more authority to employees to make decisions empowers them.

4.6 KEYWORDS

Authority: Authority are rights inherent in a managerial position.

Centralization: It refers to the systematic and consistent reservation of authority at central points within an organization.

Chain of Command: It is a continuous line of authority extending from top to bottom of the organization.

Decentralization: It is a systematic delegation of authority at various levels of organization.

Departmentalization: It refers to basis used for jobs grouping to make departments.

Organizational Structure: It is a formal arrangement of jobs within an organization.

Organizing: It is the process of arranging and structuring of organizational work to accomplish organization's goals.

Span of Control: Span of control pertains to the number of employees who can be effectively and efficiently supervised by a manager.

4.7 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1. Describe importance of good office organization.
- 2. What is line organization? Discuss its advantages and disadvantages.
- 3. Enumerate limitations of committee. How can committee be made effective?
- 4. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of line and staff organization.
- 5. Enumerate the features of Staff organizations. Why this organization is not suitable for small organizations?
- 6. What do you understand by "Centralization"? Describe the advantages and disadvantages of centralization in an office.
- 7. "Centralization and decentralization are two sides of same coin." Comment.
- 8. How is delegation different from decentralization? Discuss the factors that necessitate decentralization in an office.
- 9. What do you understand by "decentralization"? How would you assess whether an office is centralized or decentralized?

Note: These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.

UNIT 5 OFFICE MANAGEMENT

Structure

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- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Objectives of Office Management
- 5.3 Importance of Office Management
- 5.4 Functions of Office Management
 - 5.4.1 Planning
 - 5.4.1.1 Nature of Planning
 - 5.4.1.2 Importance of Planning
 - 5.4.1.3 Problems in Planning
 - 5.4.1.4 Planning Process
 - 5.4.2 Organizing
 - 5.4.2.1 Steps in Organizing
 - 5.4.3 Coordinating
 - 5.4.3.1 Importance of Coordinating
 - 5.4.3.2 Nature of Coordination
 - 5.4.3.3 Techniques of Coordination
 - 5.4.4 Controlling
 - 5.4.4.1 Nature of Control
 - 5.4.4.2 Importance of Controlling
 - 5.4.4.3 Steps in Control Process
 - 5.4.4.4 Essentials of an Effective Control System
 - 5.4.4.5 Control Measures for an Office Manager (W.H. Leffingwell)
- 5.5 Activities of Office
- 5.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 5.7 Keywords
- 5.8 Terminal Questions

5.0 **OBJECTIVES**

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- describe the objectives of office management;
- discuss the importance of office management;
- explain the various functions of office management viz. planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling; and
- describe the various activities of office.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Office is an important component of business/organization so much so that it is termed as the centre of an organization. Office is a place where all types of paper work is done to plan, organize, coordinate and control various activities of the organization in a smooth and efficient manner. In order to carry out the work of an office effectively and efficiently, you need to understand and learn about various important aspects related to office management. In this unit, you will be introduced to some of these aspects.

First of all, you will learn about the objectives and importance of office management. You will further learn about the important functions of office management such as Planning, Organizing, Coordinating and Controlling, which are required for smooth conduct of offices. Next, you will learn about various activities of office.

5.2 OBJECTIVES OF OFFICE MANAGEMENT

An office is focal point of an organization. Like a human brain, it controls the activities of the organization. In an office, clerical functions like information collection and dissemination, record keeping, and managerial functions such as planning, formulation of policies, organization, controlling etc. are performed. In order to carry out such diverse activities, offices need to be managed. Different authors have defined the term office management differently. Some of the definitions of the office management are given below:

"Office management is that branch of management which is concerned with the services of obtaining, recording and analyzing information of planning and communicating, by means of which the management of a business safeguards its assets, promotes its affairs and achieves its objectives."-Institute of Administrative Management, England.

"Office management may be defined as the manipulation and control of men, methods, machines and materials to achieve the best possible result of the highest possible quality with the best possible effort and expense, in the shortest practicable time and in a manner acceptable to the top management."-Wylie and Brecht

"Office management as a function is that branch of the art and science of management which is concerned with the efficient performances of office work, whenever and wherever that work is done."- Leffing well and Robinson

Above definitions clearly indicate that aim of the office management is the organization of an office and this office organization helps in achieving specific office objectives. For achieving these objectives, office management aims to put human and non-human resources to optimum use.

Some of the main objectives of the office management are as given folow:

- doals: All organizations have certain goals and objectives which they strive to achieve over a period. Organizations have long term as well as short-term goals. All the functional areas/ departments of the organizations derive their departmental objectives from long-term organizational objectives and decide their mid to short term goals in terms of activities to be carried out. Office management helps in deciding goals and objectives of the office in order to help organization to achieve its long-term goals. Office manager can make plans, collect information, hire and train staff and organize resources to contribute to organizational goals.
- 2) Optimum utilization of office resources: One of the major objectives of office management is the optimum utilization of office resources-both human and material. Optimum utilization means achieving both efficiency (maximum outputs with minimum inputs) and effectiveness (timely completion of tasks). It involves doing things right as well as doing right things. Optimum utilization can be ensured by proper planning, organizing, directing and controlling of office work.
- 3) Ensuring operational workflow: Another objective of office management is to ensure smooth flow of work in office. This involves supervising the administrative staff to ensure that they are performing the allotted duties in a proper manner. For example, receptionist greets visitors, phone calls are answered in time, phone etiquettes are followed, customer service representatives are courteous, and timely and accurate handling of mail. It may also involve overseeing cleaning, maintenance, repair and other functions essential for office operations. Standard office procedures, written policies, procedures, and rules can be of great help in achieving functionality. Office staff may be sent for training to improve operational workflow.
- 4) Effective communication flow: Effective communication flow is another important objective of office management. It includes all types of information flows in office *viz*. horizontal, vertical, diagonal, written, verbal, upward, downward, formal, and informal. Communication channels should ensure fast and timely flow of accurate and relevant information. Office interactions should be meaningful. Interpersonal communications should be frank, open, supporting, and inculcating cooperative relations in the office. Employees should be comfortable in approaching office manager. They should feel valued. Visitors should feel welcome in the office environment. Effective communication will help in inculcation of supportive office culture.

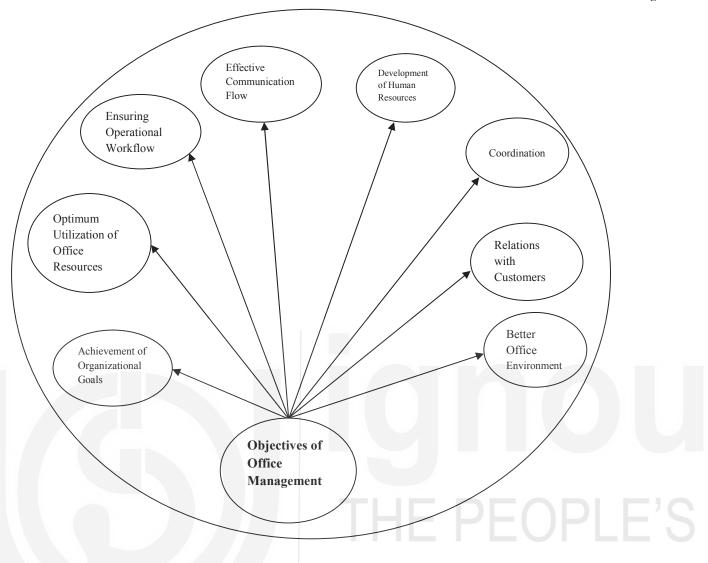


Figure 5.1: Objectives of Office Management

- 5) Development of human resources: Development of human resources in the office is a crucial objective of office management. It is extremely important to develop human resources, as they are the only thinking resource and greatly influence the proper utilization of other resources. For this, objectives of office management are to ensure proper supply of work force, training of employees, their remuneration, evaluation, motivation, supervision etc.
- 6) Coordination: Diverse activities are performed in the office. These include handling of mail, record management, inventory management, organizing of events and meetings, taking notes, report writing, reporting, information collection and dissemination, handling phones, managing visitors etc. to name a few. Coordinating these diverse administrative operations is must for smooth operational office flow in office. Office management ensures that there are no inter and intra team conflicts. Office management also ensures that rest of the organizational activities and tasks take place unhindered.
- 7) Relations with customers and suppliers: It is the objective of office management to ensure good working relations with customers and

- suppliers. Customers bring business to the organization and should be treated with dignity by customer service representatives. Their concerns and grievances must be addressed. Good relations with suppliers help in getting better prices and preferential treatment. This ensures adequate level of supplies at best prices.
- 8) Better office environment: Office management plays a significant role in making office a better place to work. It is the job of the office manager to stock adequate supplies (for example stationery items) in the office. Regular supplies of copier paper, notebooks, file folders, staples, tape, pencils and pens, batteries, toiletry items etc. should be maintained as employees depend on the administrative staff for such items. S/he should maintain tools, equipment and machinery (working telephone and internet connections, photocopying machines etc.) needed to run office. Office management helps in ensuring safety measures such as fire extinguishers at work place. It helps in ascertaining that company vehicles are properly maintained, are in working conditions and having proper legal documents etc. (license, registration, pollution control certification and insurance).

5.3 IMPORTANCE OF OFFICE MANAGEMENT

Proper planning, organizing, coordination and control of office activities, reduction of office costs etc. help in smooth functioning of office work. It is very important to manage an office efficiently and effectively as success of a business is dependent on efficient and effective performance of the office work to a great extent. Below given points emphasize the importance of office management:

- 1) Helps in achieving goals: Office management helps in achievement of office goals in a smooth, efficient and cost-effective way. This becomes possible due to proper planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling of various office activities and by managing change, challenges and innovations in office.
- 2) Optimum utilization of office resources: Office management can ensure optimum utilization of scarce office resources such as human, material, machines and equipment. Managers can guide the human resources as to how to use resources efficiently. Managers can remove unnecessary activities and avoid duplication of efforts using principles of organization. Coordination, integration and control of various resources will also lead to better utilization of resources.
- 3) Cost reduction: Optimum utilization of resources (money, man, material and machines) leads to reduction of wastage and helps in doing the office activities in a cheapest manner. Work simplification, mechanization and digitalization of office work can also lead to cost reduction. Similarly sound planning, suitable organization structure,

- coordination among activities, and effective control will help in reducing costs of operating an office and make an organization more competitive.
- 4) Maintains and enhances office efficiency: Office management helps in enhancing as well as maintaining efficiency in office work and activities with the help of optimum utilization of resources and cost cutting techniques employed in office.
- 5) Smooth flow of work: Office management helps in uninterrupted workflow in office. Smooth flow of work is made possible through proper planning and exercising effective control.
- 6) Helps in managing public relations: Office management is helpful in maintaining good public relations in the office. Good office management helps in effective redressal of grievances of consumers and other publics and makes it look more trust worthy to various stakeholders. All this enhances goodwill of the enterprise.
- 7) Managing change: Change is inevitable in the life of an organization and most often employees in the organization are averse to change and resist the change. Proper planning, implementation and control of change can help managers to overcome this resistance. Office management helps in coping with changes in efficiency and economy, which are affected due to technology and work practices changes. Office management thus acts as a change-agent in such situations.
- 8) Helps in attracting and retaining talent: Good and comfortable working environment, smooth flow of work, efficient work practices etc. may help in attracting and retaining capable employees. Employees do not want to leave good offices and become loyal to the organization.
- 9) Managing challenges for survival and growth: In order to grow and survive, an organization has to meet and overcome many challenges. Challenges such as changes in competition, changes in technology and changes in work practices must be anticipated. Also, organizations need to adapt to these changes for survival and growth. Office management helps managers to achieve goals in time by overcoming these challenges.
- **10) Supports innovation:** Good office management helps and supports new, better and different ways of accomplishing work in office. Good record keeping, indexing and filing (online or offline) can help in finding and incorporating suggestions of employees, customers and other stakeholders to improve existing system.
- 11) Facilitates coordination of office functions: Office management coordinates and integrates various office functions in order to achieve office goals in an efficient and effective manner. It helps to ensure that no important activity is left and no activity is duplicated. In addition, work is broken down into smaller units to facilitate work specialization. Planning helps in setting goals, organizing function helps in

departmentalization, centralization/ decentralization and delegation of work activities. Coordination helps in integration of various activities and control ensures conformity to plans.

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1.	How does office management help in cost reduction?
2.	Discuss the importance of office management in an organization.
3.	How does office management help in ensuring operational workflow in offices?
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4.	"One of the major objectives of office management is the optimum utilization of office resources- both human and material". Comment.

5.4 FUNCTIONS OF OFFICE MANAGEMENT

Offices are those tools of management, which help in managing a business effectively and efficiently. Thus, office management is an essential element of total management of an enterprise. Office management is concerned with the efficient and effective performance of office functions, using principles of general management by optimally utilizing the resources of office.

Through office management individuals are provided centralized guidance to direct the individual efforts towards the common goals of office. Every office thus needs to decide office objectives, choose course of action to achieve these objectives, co-ordinate office activities, direct and evaluate human resources to check whether their performance is directed toward the objectives. As per George R. Terry "Office management may be defined as the art of guiding the personnel of the office in the use of materials, methods, machines and equipment appropriate to their environment in order to achieve its specified purposes." Office activities are performed by office staff working with appropriate machines and equipments in office environment for providing efficient and economical clerical service to entire organization. It is the function of office management to plan, organize, guide and control all the activities of the office staff to achieve common objectives. For this, office managers perform the planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling functions of general management.

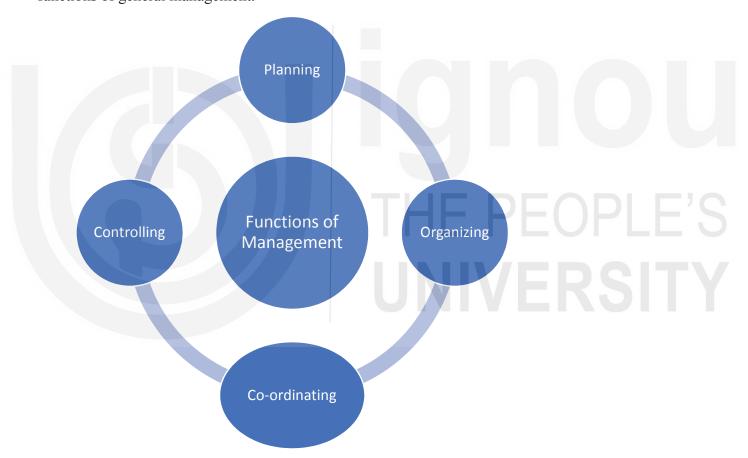


Figure 5.2: Functions of Office Management

5.4.1 Planning

Planning is the primary function of office management. It precedes all other office management functions. It establishes the purpose and direction for all other functions of office management. It is deciding in advance, what needs to be done, when it will be done, how it will be done, where it will be done and who will do it. Planning is future oriented and forward looking. It can be called a blue print for future course of action. Planning is all about

anticipation of future and making a conscious choice for an action. Plans, which are the result of planning process, outline the steps to be taken to achieve the office goals.

"Planning is the function that determines in advance what should be done. It consists of selecting the office objectives, policies, programs, procedures, and other means of achieving these objectives."-Haimann.

"Planning involves selecting office objectives, departmental goals, and programs and determining the ways of accomplishing them. Planning thus provides a tactical approach."- Koontz and O'Donnell.

Forecasting, decision-making, strategy formulation, policy-making, programming, scheduling, budgeting, problem-solving, innovation, and research are some of the sub-functions of planning. Thus, planning is the process of deciding the office goals and then selecting course of actions to achieve these decided goals within the internal and external office environment. Office objectives and the actions are decided with reference to overall organizational objectives. As shown in figure 5.3, planning helps in taking office from current status (at time t_1) to a desired status (at time t_2) by identifying and then suggesting ways for reducing the gap in both the statuses. Planning quality and implementation leads to positive financial results, higher profits and better returns on investment in office. Planning is necessary for deciding the kind of organization structure, deciding the kind of people required, deciding the ways to effectively lead the people and how to ensure implementation of plans by providing standards of control in office.

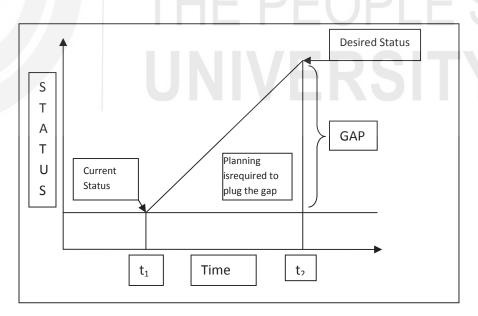


Figure 5.3: Reduction of gap between current and desired status with the help of Planning

5.4.1.1 Nature of Planning

- 1. Planning is a goal-oriented activity and paves way to achieve office objectives by suggesting actions to be taken.
- 2. It is the primary function and lays foundation for all other managerial functions of office. All other functions *viz*. organizing, staffing, directing and controlling are designed to support the achievement of office objectives.
- 3. Planning is a pervasive function as it is preformed in all offices at all levels.
- 4. Planning is a thinking, intellectual, and rational process. It involves use of mental faculties.
- 5. It is a continuous process as old plans need to be revised and new plans needs to be made as per changed circumstances in office.
- 6. It is futuristic in nature as it involves anticipating and affects future of office.
- 7. Planning is based on decision-making, which involves choosing among alternative courses of actions. Planning assumes existence of alternatives, which are evaluated, and then best is chosen for implementation.
- 8. Planning is an integrated process. Planning results in different plans, which are independent, yet need to be interrelated. This process of integration results in end-means chain.

5.4.1.2 Importance of Planning

The importance of planning is as follows:

- 1) Focuses on objectives: Planning helps office mangers to focus attention on office objectives. It ensures that members do not get lost in maze of routine activities and lose sight of the desired ends of office.
- 2) Provides direction: Planning keeps office action oriented and provides a results-driven sense of direction to the activities being carried out in office.
- 3) Reduces uncertainty: Planning helps in anticipating future events and environment. Though planning cannot predict future with certainty but can help in coping with uncertainty.
- 4) Minimizes waste and redundancy: Planning eliminates unproductive office work. Planning ensures that all essential office activities are done in a proper way and non essential, unproductive, out of place activities are not done. Thus, planning ensures that all resources are used to best advantage and cost and redundancy are reduced.
- 5) Sets the standards for controlling: Planning is the foundation of control. No planning is successful without control and no control is

- possible without planning. Plans provide the standards for performance evaluation using which performances in the office are gauged.
- **6) Priority oriented:** Planning ensures that the most important objectives get first attention.
- 7) Change oriented: Planning helps in coping with change by anticipating problems and opportunities in time to deal with these in best possible manner.
- **8)** Acts as basis for delegation: Well made plans serve as guides to subordinates and make the job of delegation easier for managers.

5.4.1.3 Problems in Planning

The various problems and hindrance in planning are listed below:

- Lack of accurate information
- Time consuming and expensive process
- Detailed plans and procedures may result in inflexibilities and curb employee initiatives.
- Office managers may lack the ability to plan
- Lack of simplicity in plans
- Lack of specific, clear, measurable, attainable goals
- Uncontrollable external factors

5.4.1.4 Planning Process

As offices differ in size and complexity, no single planning process is followed in the offices. However, given below are some of the main/common steps generally followed in planning process:

- 1) Establishing objectives: First step in planning process is to set clear and measurable office objectives. Objectives should clearly specify what is to be done, where would the action take place, who is to perform the action and when is it to be performed. For example, mistake free letters, achieving typing speed of 60 words per minute, reducing customer complaints by 30%, make any defective machine operational within 24 hours are clearly spelt objectives.
- 2) Developing planning premises: Planning premises are the assumptions about the future environment. Planning is made for future and no one can predict future with certainty. Hence, office managers make certain assumptions about the future and these assumptions become the boundaries within which plans are implemented. Planning premises can be internal (such as resources of the office), external (such as customer demand), controllable (such as hiring policies of the organization) and uncontrollable (minimum wages policy of government).

- 3) Searching for alternatives: There maybe many ways to achieve a target. For example, efficiency in office work can be achieved by training the existing staff, by hiring more skilled staff, by mechanization of office work or by outsourcing of office work. Thus, alternative courses of action should be searched using imagination and foresight. Critical factors must be kept in view while deciding alternatives.
- 4) Evaluation of alternatives: Alternatives developed in previous step should be evaluated. Alternatives may be evaluated based on costs, benefits, risks, organizational capabilities, short term and long term impacts etc. Strong and weak points of the alternatives should be carefully analyzed. Computer based mathematical models and techniques can be used for evaluation.
- 5) Selection of optimum course of action: Most suitable course of action out of the ones evaluated in step 4 is chosen for implementation. At this point, a decision is made about which out of the evaluated alternatives is most suitable to adopt.
- 6) Formulation of derivative plans: This is the final step of the planning process. Necessary sub-plans to support and help the main plans are formulated. These are the tactical plans, budgets and action programs for timely implementation of the main plan.

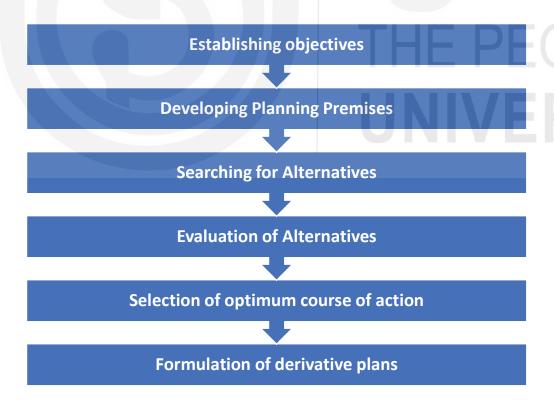


Figure 5.4: Planning Process

5.4.2 Organizing

i) As a process, organizing is an important function of the office management. Organizing refers to the process of identifying, ordering, classifying and allocating the actions to be performed for the achievement of office objectives. Haimann defines "Organizing as the process of defining and grouping the activities of the enterprise and establishing the authority relationships among them. In performing the organizing function, the manager defines, departmentalizes and assigns activities so that they can be most effectively executed."

Organizing process comprises differentiation and integration of activities of organization. Differentiation demands division of work and integration involves unification of the effort. Thus, organizing involves a harmonious blending of specialized parts of organization. This blending is effected through coordinated system of authority responsibility relationships.

Result of organizing process is organization structure. Organization structure is the network of relationships among various job positions in the organization. Structure is the skeleton of the organization within which efforts of different individuals are coordinated with each other.

5.4.2.1 Steps in Organizing



Figure. 5.5: Steps in Organising

- 1) **Identification of activities**: All activities needed to accomplish the office objectives are identified.
- **2) Division of activities:** Total work is divided into manageable activities as no one can accomplish all the work. It should be ensured that no important and necessary activity is left and no duplication of work takes place.
- **3) Grouping of activities:** Similar or closely related activities are combined together to make positions, jobs or sections or departments. This grouping of similar activities is called departmentation.
- **4) Assignment of jobs**: All created jobs are assigned to individuals by matching individual capabilities with the requirement of job.

5) Delegation of authority: Appropriate authority is delegated to each position in the organization. Authority and responsibility are balanced for each position in the organization. Delegation of authority creates hierarchical relations in the organization.

5.4.3 Coordinating

As per Henri Fayol, "To coordinate is to harmonize all the activities of a concern so as to facilitate its working and its success. In a well-coordinated enterprise, each department or division works in harmony with others and is fully informed of its role in the organization. The working schedule of various departments is constantly tuned to circumstances."

Coordinating function of management is all about unifying the efforts and activities of different individuals, groups and departments in an office to achieve office objectives with minimum friction. It is about bringing together the efforts of the subordinates in an orderly and deliberate manner so that unified efforts lead to the stated objectives. It involves blending, integrating and harmonizing the diverse activities performed in an office. Balancing, timing, and integrating are three main elements of coordinating process.

5.4.3.1 Importance of Coordinating

- 1) **Provides unity in diversity:** Coordination provides much needed unity to the diverse activities performed in the office. It is like a silken thread keeping the pearls together in necklace.
- 2) Facilitates team work: Without coordinating, no teamwork is possible.

 Team consists of individuals working on different aspects of a problem.

 Their efforts need to be coordinated to get fruitful results.
- 3) Propels growth: Coordination is a must in big offices as large number of employees are performing variety of jobs. Personal contacts and communication are difficult in big organizations. In such an event, coordinating function facilitates the growth of offices.
- **4) Creates synergy:** Coordination brings synergy to office efforts. Coordination integrates and blends the individual efforts and such coordinated efforts far exceed the sum total of individual efforts.
- 5) Economy and efficiency: Coordinating helps in bringing economy to office operations by reducing duplication of efforts. Proper integration and blending of activities and efforts ensures optimum utilization of resources.
- 6) Good human relations: Coordinating individual employee interest with office interest can improve job satisfaction and morale of employees. Coordination can also be instrumental in reducing conflicts in offices. All these can result in good human relations at work.

5.4.3.2 Nature of Coordination

Following statements describe the nature of Coordination:

- Coordination is. The basic responsibility of office manager.
- Coordination is the result of deliberate efforts.
- Coordination is a continuous process.
- Coordination is mandatory where group efforts are involved.
- Coordinatino is based on systems concept.

5.4.3.3 Techniques of Coordination

The various techniques of coordination are as follows:

- Clearly defined goals of office
- Harmony in various policies and programs
- Cooperation among staff
- Clear chain of command
- Sound organizational structure
- Effective communication flow
- Liaison officers such as project managers
- Effective leadership
- Commonality of interest

5.4.4 Controlling

Controlling is an important function of office manager. Controlling ensures that office objectives are being achieved in a predefined manner and as per pre-decided time schedule. In order to seek pre-decided outcomes from office staff, office manager needs to effectively control the activities of the subordinates. Controlling ensures that office activities are performed as per the plans and office resources are used optimally for the achievement of predefined office goals. Controlling is required in all kinds of offices. Controlling is not the last function of management rather it brings management cycle back to planning stage. The controlling function provides feedback to planning function by pointing out deviations from standards, by analysing the causes of the deviations, and by suggesting corrective actions. This feedback helps in reviewing and revising the existing plans in the light of encountered problems and results in better plans in future.

5.4.4.1 Nature of Control

- Controlling is a universal process as it is exercised for all activities of the office.
- It is a continuous process as employee efforts need to be continuously monitored to keep them on right track.

- Control is forward looking, as past cannot be controlled.
- Control involves measurement, as it requires comparing actual performance with the standards.
- Control curbs the undesirable behavior and makes people conform to rules and regulations.

5.4.4.2 Importance of Controlling

The importance of controlling is discussed bellow:

- 1) Guide to operations: It acts as a guiding light to office operations by keeping the activities aligned to office objectives through continuous monitoring and correcting deviations.
- 2) Policy verification: Control helps managers to verify the relevance of the plans in the changed circumstances. It points out need to review, revise and update the plans before things go out of control.
- 3) Employee morale: Control helps in motivating employees by providing clear, attainable, and measurable performance standards to employees.
- 4) **Psychological pressure:** Sound control system puts pressure on employees to perform well as they know their performance will be measured and evaluated.
- 5) Helps in uncovering deficiencies: There are various controllable and uncontrollable forces which can put the achievement of goals off the track. Controlling helps in uncovering deficiencies in the system caused due to such forces and remove the causes in time.

5.4.4.3 Steps in Control Process

Below mentioned are the various steps in control process:

- 1) Establishment of standards: First step in control process is to establish the control standards. Actual performance will be measured and evaluated against these benchmarks. These standards can be qualitative (such as goodwill, image, human relations in office) or quantitative (such as quantity of output, number of customer inquiries to be handled). These standards should be as far as possible quantitative, objective, accurate, clear, flexible, and reasonable.
- 2) Measurement of actual performance: In this step, actual performance is measured. Measurement should be accurate and reliable. For quantitative standards, performance should be measured in quantitative terms. For qualitative standards, opinion surveys can be done to measure the performance.
- 3) Comparing performance with standards: In this, actual performance is compared with the standards to find out any deviations between actual results and desired results

4) Analysis of deviations: Deviations noted in third stage are analysed. There can be three outcomes no deviation, actual performance exceeding standards and actual performance falling short of standards.

Not all deviations need to be reported to higher authorities. Insignificant deviations (both positive and negative) do not demand any attention. Only exceptional deviations demand some actions. Such deviations and their causes are reported to the concerned managers.

5) Taking corrective action: This is the final step of the control process. This step ensures that deviations do not occur in future and objectives are achieved. Corrective actions can be taking no action, revising objectives, training of the employees etc.

Two mistakes are to be taken care of at this stage – taking an action when no action is required and taking no action when an action is required. Effective control system would suggest a right action at the right time.

5.4.4.4 Essentials of an Effective Control System

Following are the essentials of an effective control system:

- 1. It should be as per the needs and objectives of the office.
- 2. It should be simple to understand.
- 3. It should focus on future actions.
- 4. Control system should focus on strategic or critical deviations.
- 5. It should be adaptable and flexible to changing conditions.
- 6. It should be economical.
- It should not only point out deviations but also lead to some corrective action.
- 8. It should be objective.

5.4.4.5 Control Measures for an Office Manager (W. H. Leffingwell's)

Below mentioned are the various control measures for an office manager by W. H. Leffingwell:

- 1. Plan and schedule the day's work in writing
- 2. Ensure that day's work is started in time
- 3. Determine the amount of unfinished work
- 4. Determine the amount of current work to be done
- 5. Measure the working force by the work
- 6. Check daily output
- 7. Insist on a full day's work
- 8. Check standard workpractice instructions

- 9. Plan daily supervision work for the week
- 10. Establish daily inspection of maintenance
- 11. Establish overall inspection of filling and record keeping
- 12. Get acquainted with the staff

5.5 ACTIVITIES OF OFFICE

Like human, each office has a different personality, which reflects the objective for the existence of the office. Office in a manufacturing unit will be different from the office in an accounting firm. Sales office will have different orientation than R & D office. Despite such differences in prime responsibilities of offices, many of the activities are common to all offices.

Some of these common activities have been listed below:

- 1. Processing/ handling incoming and outgoing mail
- 2. Taking dictation
- 3. Producing transcription
- 4. Typing of letters, circulars, orders, memorandums etc.
- 5. Various kinds of printing jobs
- 6. Making duplicate copies of documents
- 7. Records maintenance (filing and indexing), records retention for future reference, records retrieval and records disposal(office records includes correspondence, letters, invoices, orders, financial and cost records, minutes etc.)
- 8. Developing office systems, procedures, standards, and methods
- 9. Maintaining communication flow
- 10. Designing and improving of office forms
- 11. Procuring stationery and other office supplies
- 12. Recruitment, selection, placement and training of office staff
- 13. Maintenance of furniture, machines, appliances etc.
- 14. Preparation and maintaining of accounts statements, pay roll, other financial records and reports etc.
- 15. Handling telephone calls
- 16. Prompt and accurate handling of customer and supplier enquiries, orders, and complaints
- 17. Preparing up to date information for the organization
- 18. Recorded, arranging and processing of collected information so as to convert it in a quickly accessible form for use by converting it into notes, reports, diagrams, graphs etc.

- 19. Safeguarding the office assets such as cash, machinery, office equipment, buildings, plants, equipment, lighting and air conditioning, furniture, title deeds, records, documents etc.
- 20. Maintaining efficient workflow in office

Check Your Progress B

1.	What are the benefits of planning in an office?						
2.	Describe the process of controlling the activities in an office.						
3.	List any four activities of office.						
	A HANVERSITY						
4.	What are the various control measures for an office manager?						

5.6 LET US SUM UP

Office is an important component of business/organization so much so that it is termed as the center of an organization. Office is a place where all types of paper work are done to plan, organize, coordinate, and control various activities of the organization in a smooth and efficient manner. In order to carry out the work of an office effectively and efficiently, you need to

understand and learn about various important aspects related to office management.

An office is focal point of an organization. Like a human brain, it controls the activities of the organization. In an office, clerical functions like information collection and dissemination, record keeping, and managerial functions such as planning, formulation of policies, organization, controlling etc. are performed. In order to carry out such diverse activities, offices need to be managed. Some of the main objectives of the office management are achievement of organizational goals, optimum utilization of office resources, ensuring operational workflow, effective communication flow, development of human resources, coordination, relations with customers and suppliers and better office environment.

Proper planning, organizing, coordination and control of office activities, reduction of office costs etc. help in smooth functioning of office work. It is very important to manage an office efficiently and effectively as success of a business is dependent on efficient and effective performance of the office work to a great extent. Office management helps in achieving goals, optimum utilization of office resources, cost reduction, maintaining and enhancing office efficiency, smooth flow of work, managing public relations, managing change, attracting and retaining talent, managing challenges for survival and growth and coordination of office function etc.

Offices are those tools of management, which help in managing a business effectively and efficiently. Thus, office management is an essential element of total management of an enterprise. Office management is concerned with the efficient and effective performance of office functions, using principles of general management by optimally utilizing the resources of office. Office activities are performed by office staff working with appropriate machines and equipments in office environment for providing efficient and economical clerical service to entire organization. It is the function of office management to plan, organize, guide and control all the activities of the office staff to achieve common objectives. For this, office managers perform the planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling functions of general management.

Like human, each office has a different personality, which reflects the objective for the existence of the office. Office in a manufacturing unit will be different from the office in an accounting firm. Sales office will have different orientation than R & D office. Despite such differences in prime responsibilities of offices, many of the activities are common to all offices. Some of these common activities are processing/ handling incoming and outgoing mail, taking dictation, producing transcription, typing of letters, circulars, orders, memorandums, making duplicate copies of documents, maintaining efficient workflow in office etc.



5.7 KEYWORDS

Controlling: Controlling can be defined as that function of management which helps to seek planned results from the subordinates, managers and at all levels of an organization. The controlling function helps in measuring the progress towards the organizational goals & brings any deviations, & indicates corrective action.

Coordinating: It is about bringing together of efforts of the subordinates in an orderly and deliberate manner so that unified efforts lead to the stated objectives.

Functions: Functions are various activities/ tasks that are natural to a person in a particular job

Office Record: Office records are some written/permanent office communication for future reference. It includes correspondence, letters, invoices, orders, financial and cost records, minutes etc.

Objectives: In context of an organization, objectives are office target or purposes to attain or accomplish and for which employee's efforts or actions are intended

Office Management: It refers to that branch of the art and science of management, which is concerned with the efficient performances of office work, whenever and wherever that work is done.

Organizing: It is the process of defining and grouping the activities of the enterprise and establishing the authority relationships among them. In performing the organizing function, the manager defines, departmentalizes and assigns activities so that they can be most effectively executed.

Planning: Planning is deciding in advance, what needs to be done, when will it be done, how will it be done, where it will be done and who will do it.

5.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1. Write a short note on office management.
- 2. What is office management? What are the objectives of office management?
- 3. "Office management is the task of planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling the efforts of employees in the office to achieve the objectives of office". Elucidate the statement.
- 4. Describe the functions performed by an office manager for running an office smoothly.
- 5. Enumerate the key activities, which are performed in an office.
- 6. Describe the importance of office management.

Note: These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.

UNIT 6 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF OFFICE MANAGER

Structure

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Roles of Office Manager
- 6.3 Duties of Office Manager
- 6.4 Qualities of a Good Office Manager
- 6.5 Functions of Office Manager
- 6.6 Skills required to be an Office Manager
- 6.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 6.8 Keywords
- 6.9 Terminal Questions

6.0 **OBJECTIVES**

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- describe various roles of office manager;
- understand the duties of office manager;
- explain the qualities of a good office manager;
- describe various functions of office manager; and
- discuss skills required to be an office manager.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

By now, you have understood the importance of office in an organization. In addition, you are well acquainted with various important aspects related to office management like objectives, activities and important functions of office management. Different tasks of the office are assigned to executives in order to carry out activities and functions of office. These executives, who are in charge of the office, are called office managers. Office managers have to perform all the functions of the office in an effective and efficient manner to help the organizations to achieve the goals. Office managers are a vital link between upper levels of management and office workers/ employees. They are responsible for proper execution of various policies of the organization. Thus, it is important to understand role, duties, qualities, skills, and functions of the office managers.

In this chapter, you will learn about the duties and responsibilities of office manager. You will get to know about various roles played by an office manager and various duties to be discharged by office manager. Next, you will be acquainted with the qualities needed to be a good office manager. Further, you will learn about various functions of office manager as well as skills required to be an effecient office manager.

6.2 ROLES OF OFFICE MANAGER

Office managers have to play various roles while discharging functions and duties allotted to them. Roles maybe defined as those behaviors that are either specified or expected from a person while performing a particular job or working in a particular position in an organization. Roles are the behavioral outcomes expected from an employee by his/her superiors and subordinates. An office manager is also expected to exhibit certain behaviors in the office. Some of the roles played by office managers have been listed below:

- 1) Leader: Office manager has to lead his office staff for effective discharge of the duties assigned to them. It is his duty to inspire the subordinates not merely by words but actions as well. He should be a role model for them.
- 2) Motivator: Another important role of office manager is to motivate his subordinates. He should understand the needs and aspirations of the subordinates. He can act as a catalyst in integrating personal goals of the employees with the goals and objectives of the office.
- 3) Trainer: Yet another role of the office manager is of trainer. He has to coach and guide the new employees in order to make them understand the office work, methods and machinery. In addition, he has to assess the training needs of the new and old employees and accordingly arrange for the orientation training and refresher training for them.
- **4) Organizer:** Office manager is responsible for the office organization. He is supposed to arrange for various meetings, seminars, events and functions of the office on a routine basis. In addition, he is responsible for the office organisation.
- 5) Supervisor: Office manager has to act as a supervisor as he is responsible for the proper discharge of the duties allocated to the subordinates. Hence, they must constantly direct, guide and supervise the subordinates and oversee their work to ensure that no mistakes are committed.
- 6) Communicator: Effective communication is essential for maintaining good interpersonal relations in an office. Communication is required for guiding, inspiring, motivating and instructing subordinates. It is essential for sending work instructions to the subordinates. Communication is also

Duties and Responsibilities of Office Manager

required for making reports, orders, circulars, and presentations. As office managers are involved in all these tasks, they need to be excellent communicators.

- 7) Delegator: Delegation of work and authority is essential for effective functioning of any organization. Delegation helps office managers to assign the routine and simpler tasks to subordinates so as to focus their energies on important and non-routine tasks of the office. Office manager must be able to delegate work as per the capabilities of the subordinates. He must ensure some means to check that the assigned tasks are performed in an appropriate manner.
- 8) Evaluator: Office manager delegates the work to subordinates and thus, is responsible for the work assigned to them. He needs to monitor the subordinates continuously to ensure that they are working in a desired fashion and their efforts are contributing to the achievement of the office goals. Performance evaluation of the subordinates is also essential for improving their shortcomings and for motivating them through promotions and pay raises. Thus, office manager has to act as an evaluator too.
- 9) Information disseminator: Lot of data is generated in offices, which needs to be monitored and analyzed to get information from it. Apart from this, lot of information is continuously available in external environment of the office. Office manager should continuously and regularly keep a tab on both internal and external information, filter and analyze these and then timely disseminate relevant information to different decision centers
- **10) Spokesperson:** Office managers also play the role of a spokesperson. They may be entrusted with the task of communicating the policies of the organization to various stakeholders and publics. In addition, they act as spokesperson of the top management to the subordinates when they communicate long-term plans, policies, any plan and policy changes, and initiation of new programs to their subordinates and try to persuade them to adhere to the norms of the organizations.
- 11) Problem Solver: Office managers have to act as problem solver too. Problem solving and decision-making are continuous and pervasive activities in an organization. Every employee is involved in problem solving related to his/her domain of work. An office manager being incharge of the office has to deal with routine and non-routine problems arising in his/her office. Repetitive problems such as employee reporting late for work can be solved by establishing standard procedures and rules. Non-routine problems, such as relocation of office, demand investment of time, efforts, and innovative solutions.
- **12)** Coordinator: Coordination is the essence of office management. It is essential for any group activity. It is like a silk thread, which keeps all

the pearls of the necklace together. It is important to synchronize, unify, integrate and harmonize the efforts and activities of subordinates for effective achievement of the goals of the organization. As a coordinator, office manager is responsible for integration of efforts of all the employees working his office through planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling.

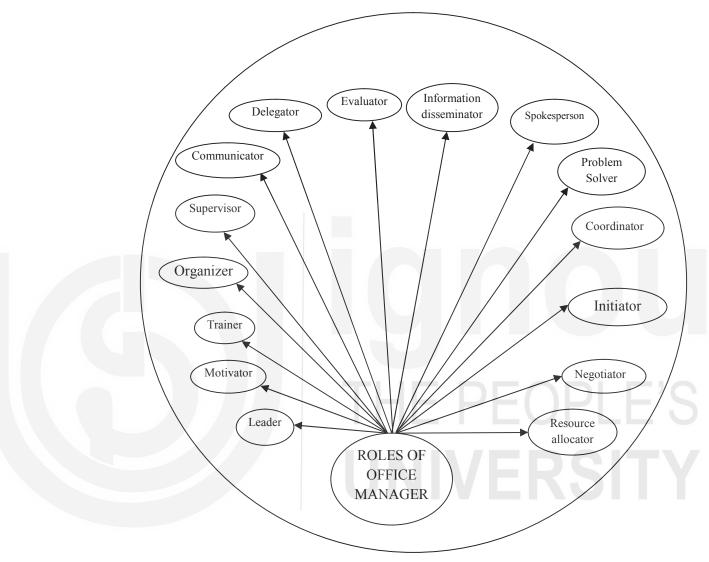


Figure 6.1: Roles of Office Manager

- 13) Initiator: Office managers can act as initiator too by conceiving new ways to do work. Organizations constantly and proactively need to adapt to environmental changes for survival and growth. As initiators, office managers can foresee the need for such changes. They can help bringing in planned changes at work place by managing restraining and driving forces.
- **14) Negotiator:** Negotiations are daily job of office managers. Office managers generally negotiate with their staff, co-workers and customers and most of the times, these negotiations are informal conversations. As negotiator, office managers build and grow mutually beneficial relationships in the office. As negotiations are about dealing with people,

- s/he must understand the interests, needs and motivations of people and try to help them achieve these besides their goals for the organization.
- 15) Resource allocator: Resources are always scare in any organization and should be optimally and judiciously used for achieving efficiency and effectiveness in office operations. As resource allocator, office manager has to see that different machines and other office equipment are available for use to everyone as per the need. Also, office layout should be having comfortable and optimal sitting arrangement for all the employees, that is, all the employees should have a place to sit in and it should be spacious enough to carry out assigned activities without any duplication of work.

6.3 DUTIES OF OFFICE MANAGER

Duties may be defined as the collection of tasks or actions associated with a particular job. Each job in the organization involves performance of certain tasks by the holder of that job position in the organization. Accordingly, duties of an office manager have been summarized below:

- 1) Maintaining office services: Office manager is responsible for smooth functioning of the office and thus, he needs to maintain various services of the office such as:
 - i) proper organization of office operations and procedures;
 - ii) preparation of payroll;
 - iii) controlling of office correspondence (Inbound and outbound);
 - iv) dealing with complaints and queries;
 - v) putting appropriate filing and indexing systems in place;
 - vi) review and approve office supply requisitions such as ordering stationery and furniture;
 - vii) delegation and monitoring of various clerical functions;
 - viii) booking transport and accommodation;
 - ix) organizing company events or conferences; and
 - x) preparing letters, presentations, and reports, etc.
- 2) Providing past references: It is the duty of the office manager to define and establish various procedures for proper maintenance of office records. These procedures include defining procedures regarding how to retain, protect, retrieve, transfer, and dispose of office records. These procedures provide historical references to new employees and help in smooth functioning of the office.
- **Maintaining office efficiency:** It is the duty of the office manager to plan and implement various systems of the office such as office layout, material, supplies and equipment procurement, etc. Effective planning and proper implementation can help in efficiency in office operations.

- 4) Designing and implementation of office policies: Office managers are responsible for making policies. They establish standards and procedures for various office activities. They are also responsible for proper implementation of these policies and procedures. In order to ensure the implementation of the policies, it is the duty of the office managers to measure and compare the results against the standards and make necessary adjustments.
- 5) Employee scheduling and assignment: Office manager's duties include scheduling and assigning of employees to ensure that office operations are accomplished with optimum resource allocation. It is the duty of the manager to delegate tasks to junior employees and to take a follow up of the work results.
- 6) Providing relevant information to management: It is the duty of the office manager to manage various databases of the organization. In addition, h/she should periodically summarize and spot the trends in the information gleaned from these databases for putting up in meetings. S/he is responsible for reviewing and analyzing important/special reports and making summary of these reports available to top management for suitable action.
- 7) Ensuring continuity of office: In order to ensure continuity of any organization, it is mandatory to ensure regular supply of work force through recruitment, selection, orientation and training of human resources. Office managers assist HR department in all these functions. They keep employees' records up to date, arrange interviews, organize induction programs and training programs for new employees and thus help in maintaining the office.
- 8) Motivating office staff: Office manager monitors, supervises, and appraises the work of administrative staff under him/her. Office managers coach, counsel, discipline, and motivate office staff by employing fair evaluation and promotion rules.
- 9) Updating self: In order to remain relevant and up to date in the changing work environment, it is the duty of office manager to update and enhance his/her professional and technical knowledge by attending educational workshops. S/he should be a member of the professional societies, should subscribe professional publications, and establish and grow professional network.
- **10) Managing office budgets:** Office manager facilitates top management in achieving financial objectives. For this, they prepare annual budget, schedule expenditures, analyze variances in standards and actual figures and on the basis of the deviations they take initiate corrective actions.
- **11) Accomplishing team efforts:** It is the duty of office manager to liaison with various stakeholders in organizations such as staff, suppliers, and clients for synergistic results.

Duties and Check Your Progress A: Responsibilities of Office Manager Explain the role of office manager as Information disseminator. Describe various duties performed by office manager for maintaining office services. Enlist various duties of office manager in an office. "It is the duty of office manager to update and enhance his/her professional and technical knowledge". Comment.

6.4 QUALITIES OF A GOOD OFFICE MANAGER

It is amply evident by now that office work is composed of various service functions. Office manager controls various activities in the office to help in achieving the office goals. S/he needs to liaison with superior and subordinates, to motivate subordinates and to optimally utilize various human and non-human resources. To achieve the organizational goals in most efficient manner, office manager should possess certain qualities. Qualities

are inherent in a person. Quality maybe defined as a specific trait, feature, attribute, or characteristic possessed by someone. The various qualities of a good office manager are listed below:

- 1) Management training: A good office manager should possess some management qualification in addition to some general basic qualification. Management qualification will give an edge while managing the office. However, there is no hard and fast rule as to what should be the minimum qualifications as qualifications are based on the job s/he does.
- 2) Good communicator: Office manager must be a good communicator. S/he should have good verbal and written communication. Good oral communication is essential for coaching, counseling, motivating, directing, and leading the subordinates. Good written communication helps in noting, drafting, making summary reports, circulars, notices, and other office communication.
- **3) Good organizer:** S/he must be possessing good organization qualities as managers need to organize meetings on a routine basis. Apart from this, entire office organization is the responsibility of office manager.
- **4) Good trainer:** As it is the responsibility of the office manager to supervise and control the work of the subordinates, s/he must be a good trainer. This will help her/him in coaching new employees through on the job or off the job training methods. Thus, s/he should be able to teach others.
- 5) Tactful: Office manager may come across difficult situations in the office. Thus, he must be able to deal with such situations tactfully. S/he should be skillful in her/his dealings with various stakeholders.
- 6) Pleasing mannerism: Office manager should have pleasing manners while dealing with critical positions and in suggesting suitable ideas. S/he should have a neat appearance for making good impression in the office.
- 7) Sincerity: Office manager must discharge his duties sincerely. S/he should have a sense of responsibility, should be disciplined and punctual so as to serve as an example to others in the office.
- 8) Leadership: Office manager must lead her/his staff from front. Her/his leadership should be able to inspire followers, instill confidence in them and must be able to inculcate team spirit. S/he should be enthusiastic towards the work and should also have excellent persuasive capabilities.
- **9) Delegation ability:** Office manager must be having sound judgment so that s/he can delegate work to staff according to the abilities of the workers.
- **10) Self-confidence and self-control:** It is important for office manager to remain calm and composed in trying situations. A good manger has confidence in self and exercises self-control and does not get irritated so easily.



Duties and Responsibilities of Office Manager

- 11) Adaptability: Good office manager would be constantly in touch with new technologies, equipment, facts and methods to increase the efficiency. S/he will always take initiative in learning new things related to work and will be adapting her/his ways of working as per the demands of the situation.
- **12) Understanding of human nature:** Office manager must be a keen observer of human behavior. S/he must understand the nuances of organizational behavior for effective leadership, motivation, supervision and control.

6.5 FUNCTIONS OF OFFICE MANAGER

Office manager has an important role to play in the office, as office work is service oriented. A manager has to perform various activities in order to achieve the purpose of his job. These activities performed by the manger in order to achieve organizational objectives as related to his job position are called functions of office manager. There is no set criterion to decide the exact functions of office manager and generally, nature, need and size of the organization decide functions of office manager. Hence, functions of office manager vary according to time, need and office and office manager is expected to discharge her/his functions within the limit of authority and responsibility delegated to him. Some of the main functions performed by an office manager are as given below:

- 1) Providing leadership: As office in-charge, office manager has to control all the work done in his office. Accordingly, he needs to lead his team effectively to ensure smooth and efficient handling of office work. He is responsible for maintaining public relations and helping other departments and subordinates to achieve their targets. For all this, he needs to be an example to them and lead them from front.
- 2) Motivation of subordinates: Motivation of employees is essential for better work performance in an organization. Proper motivation leads to more efficiency. Better results motivate employees to improve their performance. Hence, another important function to be performed by office manager is to motivate her/his employees. As the needs of the employees differ, accordingly ways to motivate them also differ. Office manager needs to find out the right type of motivation to ensure effective and economical work performance.
- 3) **Performance evaluation:** Another important function of office manager is performance evaluation of the subordinates. Fair, just and timely evaluation motivates employees, improves their performance and leads to promotion. Hence, measurement of employees' output and offering rewards based on the output is an important function of office manager as it also helps in seeking co-operation of the employees.



- **Maintaining discipline:** Office manager is responsible for maintaining discipline in the office. He must see to it that rules and regulations are implemented with the right spirit and without any biases. He should explain rules and regulations to his subordinates and should address the grievances of the staff.
- 5) Staffing: An office manager coordinates with human resources department for recruitment and selection of the staff. It is his function to ensure that right person is selected for the right job. For this purpose, he needs to determine quantity and quality of staff needed, decide and find new sources of recruitment, receive applications, conduct interviews/ tests, and select right employee.
- 6) Imparting training: Yet another important function of office manager is to arrange for the training of the new as well as old employees. He helps new employees in getting to know the organization by arranging orientation training for them. He provides refresher training to old employees to enhance their skills by arranging training to help them to learn latest tools, techniques, equipment, and machinery.
- 7) Facilitate coordination: Coordination is another important function of office manager as s/he is responsible for coordination of various activities of office staff. He has to coordinate between various stakeholders in organization. For example, he has to act as a link between top management and the workers. Then he has to coordinate with human resource department for recruitment, selection, training etc.
- 8) Costing and accounting: An office manager needs to maintain costing and accounting records especially in small organizations. Thus, he should have thorough knowledge of costing and accounting related aspects. Every figure should be on his fingertips.
- 9) Controlling of stationery and office machinery: Stationery control in an organization is also the responsibility of office manager. He must frame clear-cut procedures for purchase, issue and storage of office stationery to ensure that right quantity of the stationery is purchased and issued to concerned officials. He is also responsible for safeguarding furniture, fittings, machines, equipments and various records of the organization. Optimum allocation and utilization of machinery and equipment is also his job.
- **10) Secretarial services:** Office manager also discharges secretarial services, as he is custodian of office records such as statutory and accounts books. He also holds meetings, drafts reports and minutes etc. as any secretary does.
- 11) Organizing and supervising: Office manager arranges and conducts office meetings, events and other office activities. As he is responsible for the entire office, he supervises office correspondence (inbound and



- outbound), messenger services, procedures, filing, indexing, record maintenance and protection, policy implementation etc.
- 12) Managing human relations: It is extremely important to maintain good relations between management and employees in an organization. Maintenance of human relations is valuable for an organization as it affects costs, competitiveness and long-term sustainability of the organization. Human relations deals with understanding and addressing the needs of the employees, fostering a conducive work culture, managing group relationships, resolving conflicts between employees, between groups and between union and management. Good human relations motivate employees to work harmoniously. Thus, an office manager must manage and maintain good human relations in an office.

6.7 SKILLS REQUIRED TO BE AN OFFICE MANAGER

Managing office is a challenging task as many times office managers operate at higher levels in the organizations and are working in close coordination with other department heads. Office managers need to ensure the smooth functioning of the office. This is no mean feat, as they have to multitask to take care of numerous responsibilities every day such as ordering office supplies, solving customer complaints, organizing events etc. They are the backbone of the organization, glue that holds all the departments together. In order to discharge such varied and important functions and duties, office managers need to be well versed in office management skills.

Given below is a list of the skills required by the office managers. However, not all office managers need exactly same skills. Desired skill set varies from office to office and depends upon how many subordinates you have to supervise, how big the office is in terms of number of employees and what software are in use in office. Also, the functions and skills of an office manager may seem similar; both are distinct from each other despite having some overlapping aspects. Functions refer to the task-based aspect of the job whereas skills refer to the ability of the manger to perform the task. Below mentioned are the various skills required to be an effective office manager:

- 1) Managerial and administrative skills: As a part of his/her job as an office manager, one is responsible for many managerial and administrative tasks in the organization. Such responsibilities of office manager may include making plans, decision-making, hiring new employees, training employees, evaluating performance, motivation, firing underperforming employees, maintaining personnel records, maintaining paperwork, scheduling and attending meetings, approving formal requisitions, conducting general business operations, delegation, conflict resolution and teamwork.
- 2) Leadership skills: Office managers generally have a team of office assistants to help him/her in discharging office work. In order to get best

- results from the team, office manager need to be an effective leader who can motivate his subordinates to put their best foot forward as they strive to achieve organizational goals. An office manager is required to lead from front to ensure that the tasks are accomplished effectively and efficiently. He is to set work standards, ensure teamwork, take initiative, ensure communication and create a healthy work culture in the office.
- organizational skills: Continuous multitasking requires great organizational skills in office for efficient and effective utilization of office resources. Office managers are responsible for scheduling and organizing meetings, arranging for events, delegation, facilities management and space management. They are also responsible for organizing and allocation of various resources to run office as well as proper record and document preparation and management.
- 4) Professional skills: An office manager must possess professional skills such as transcription, note taking, handling inward and outward mail, file indexing, proofreading, managing appointments, revising drafting, report writing, reporting skills and record keeping. They must know how to handle various machines used in office and should update their knowledge on a continuous and proactive basis. These skills make her/him effective in day to day functioning of the office.
- 5) Information technology skills: It is era of digitalization and almost all the offices are using information technology (IT) in varied forms. Use of IT is no longer a choice but a compulsion for remaining competitive nowadays. Software like Microsoft Office help you in preparing documents, presentations and charts. Internet helps in inter and intra organizational communication instantaneously. Software helps you in database maintenance, inventory management and account keeping to name a few. So, as an office manager, one should possess strong IT and computer skills. Some of IT related skills to be acquired by office manager are knowledge of microsoft office, operating systems, data entry, digital calendars, email management, file sharing etc.
- 6) Finance and accounting skills: An office manager needs to have a basic understanding of finance and accounting. Office managers may be entrusted with the tasks such as preparation of financial statements, invoices, bookkeeping, budget preparation and management, payroll, handling of petty cash etc. Office manager may be asked to prepare and manage quarterly and semiannual reports and documents as well. S/he must have knowledge of popular accounting software too.
- 7) Communication skills: Another important skill needed by office managers is strong written and verbal communication skill. Communication skills help office manager to be effective receptionist as many times they are the first point of contact to the outsiders in the office. Communication skills help in delegation of work and resolution of conflicts. It also helps in acting as a bridge between the employees of



the organization. In order to carry out the work, office managers need to be accurate, efficient, friendly and professional in their communication. Office communication includes written communication, verbal communication, e-etiquettes and phone etiquettes.

- 8) Interpersonal skills: Also known as human relations skills or human skills or social skills are another set of important skills to be possessed by office manager. Manager has to deal with people visiting his office. He also interacts with his colleagues, superiors and subordinates while working in his office on a routine basis. It is important to have a positive approach and attitude while interacting with other humans to strike a rapport and have a congenial work atmosphere. Good interpersonal relations result in great teamwork. Human relations encompass various interactions at work places such as conflicts, group efforts and cooperative efforts. Human relations skills help employees in achieving economic, psychological and social satisfaction at work places.
- 9) Time management skills: Time is of essence and a scarce resource, which cannot be bought with any amount of money. Responsibilities of office manager are multiple and diverse in nature. In addition, most often s/he has to multitask, time management skills are very important for her/him. S/he must learn how to identify time waters, how to delegate, allocate and prioritize work, and adhere to deadlines so that every minute of the duty time can be fully utilized.
- 10) Analytical skills: Office manager should have analytical skills as well to be an effective manager. Analytical skills help you to find inefficiencies in the existing system by continually questioning the existing processes, practices, and procedures. It helps office manager to find innovative, creative and out of box solutions to office problems and contributes to organization's short term and long-term growth. Some of the analytical skills include problem-solving, process improvement, critical thinking, creativity, optimization and use of deductive and inductive reasoning. Some other skills which can help one becoming effective manger include skills related to auditing, benchmarking, inventory management, billing, desktop publishing, handling legal documents, handling stress, troubleshooting, management of social media, use and optimization of search engines, developing and maintaining standard operating procedures, reliability, accuracy, attention to details and adaptability.

Check Your Progress B:

1)	What do quality of	-	nderstand ice manag	2	rm (qualities?	Explain	the	adaptabili	ty

Offi	ce Organization
and	Management

2)	Differentiate between functions and skills.
3)	How a manager can motivate employees in the office?
4)	Explain the importance of managing human relations in an office.
	THE PEOPLE'S

6.7 LET US SUM UP

Offices are important as these help in achievement of organizational goals and objectives. Office managers as in charges of these offices perform various functions efficiently and effectively to help organizations achieve their goals. Office managers are a vital link between upper levels of management and office workers/employees.

Office managers have to play various roles while discharging functions and duties allotted to them. Roles maybe defined as those behaviors that are either specified or expected from a person while performing a particular job or working in a particular position in an organization. Roles are the behavioral outcomes expected from an employee by his/her superiors and subordinates. An office manager is also expected to exhibit certain behaviors in the office. Some of the roles played by office managers are leader, motivator, trainer, organizer, supervisor, communicator, delegator, spokesperson, negotiator, initiator, resource allocator, etc.

Duties and Responsibilities of Office Manager

Duties may be defined as the collection of tasks or actions associated with a particular job. Each job in the organization involves performance of certain tasks by the holder of that job position in the organizations. Accordingly, duties of an office manager are maintaining office services, providing past references, maintaining office efficiency, designing and implementation of office policies, employee scheduling and assignment, providing relevant information to management, maintaining/ ensuring continuity of office, maintaining/motivating office staff, updating self and managing office budgets, etc.

It is evident by now that office work is composed of various service functions. Office manager controls various activities in the office to help in achieving the office goals. S/he needs to liaison with superior and subordinates, to motivate subordinates and to optimally utilize various human and non-human resources. To achieve the organizational goals in most efficient manner, office manager should possess certain qualities. A good office manager must be a good communicator, good organizer, tactful, sincere, a good leader, should have self-confidence and self-control, adaptable and should have understanding of human nature.

Office manager has an important role to play in the office, as office work is service oriented. A manager has to perform various activities in order to achieve the purpose of his job. These activities performed by the manager in order to achieve organizational objectives as related to his job position are called functions of office manager. Functions of office manager vary according to time, need and office and office manager is expected to discharge her/his functions within the limit of authority and responsibility delegated to her/him. Some of the main functions performed by an office manager are providing leadership, motivating subordinates, performance evaluation, maintaining discipline, staffing, imparting training, facilitate coordination, managing human relations etc.

Managing office is a challenging task as many times office managers operate at higher levels in the organizations and are working in close coordination with other department heads. Office managers need to ensure the smooth functioning of the office. This is no mean feat, as they have to multitask to take care of numerous responsibilities every day such as ordering office supplies, solving customer complaints, organizing events etc. They are the backbone of the organization, glue that holds all the departments together. In order to discharge such varied and important functions and duties, office managers need to be well versed in office management skills such as managerial and administrative skills, leadership skills, organizational skills, professional skills, information technology related skills, finance and accounting skills, communication skills, interpersonal skills, time management skills, and analytical skills.

6.8 KEYWORDS

Adaptability: It is the quality of being flexible or capability to adjust to new conditions/ new uses.

Duties: Duties are collection of tasks or actions associated with a particular job.

Leader: A leader is person who persuades followers for the achievement of a goal.

Negotiator: Negotiator is a person who either himself/herself signs an agreement with other stake holders in the organization, or who helps other parties to reach at an agreement.

Organizer: An organizer is a person who arranges for events or activities by putting in efforts and thus brings order in an office.

Quality: It is a specific trait, feature, attribute, or characteristic possessed by someone.

Role: Roles are the behavior patterns either specified or expected from a person performing a particular job or working in a particular position in an organization.

Spokesperson: Spokesperson is a person who speaks on behalf of an office.

Tactful: These are skills, consideration and sensitivity exhibited in dealing with peers and/or while dealing with difficult issues.

6.9 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1. Explain the role of office manager as Information disseminator, Leader, Organizer, Spokesperson and Motivator.
- 2. "Roles are the expected behavior of a job position". In light of this statement, discuss various roles an office manager is expected to play in an office.
- 3. State and explain the functions performed by an office manager.
- 4. What are the duties of an office manager in relation to top management and subordinates? Elucidate.
- 5. Describe the qualities to be possessed by a good office manager.
- 6. What do office managers have to do in order to maintain office services?

Note: These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.

BLOCK 3 FILING, INDEXING AND PUBLISHING

BLOCK 3 FILING, INDEXING AND PUBLISHING

This is the third block of the course "Office Management and Secretarial Practices". This block is structured to cover the fundamentals and preliminary aspects of filing, indexing & publishing. The block on the theme "Filing, Indexing & Publishing" comprises of three units, the detail of which is mentioned below:

Unit 7: Discusses the meaning and importance of filing and the essentials of a good filing system. It also distinguishes between centralized and decentralized filing. It makes the learners understand the concept of paperless office methods of filing. The later part of the unit also discusses the steps of filing procedure.

Unit 8: Makes the learners aware about Indexing. It explains how to ensure that filed papers are located easily and quickly whenever they are needed and how to add to the efficiency of the filing method and ensures speed in finding the files that consequently result in savings in time, labor and the resultant economy.

Unit 9: Explains the meaning of publishing and publishing platforms including digital publishing platform, social media platform and content publishing platform. It discusses the concept of publishing annual reports, and publishing forms used in office. The later part of the unit deals with animated publishing in a multimedia format.

UNIT 7 FILING OF DOCUMENTS

Structure

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Meaning and Importance of Filing
- 7.3 Essentials of Good Filing System
- 7.4 Office Filing Procedure
- 7.5 Centralized v/s Decentralized filing
 - 7.5.1 Centralisation
 - 7.5.2 Decentralization
 - 7.5.3 Centralized v/s Decentralized Filing
- 7.6 System of Classification
- 7.7 Concept of Paperless Office Methods of Filing
- 7.8 Steps of Filing Procedure
- 7.9 Digitalization and Retrieval of Records
- 7.10 Weeding of Old Records
- 7.11 Let Us Sum Up
- 7.12 Keywords
- 7.13 Terminal Questions

7.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- understand the meaning and importance of filing;
- discuss the essentials of a good filing system;
- understand the concept of Office Filing Procedure;
- distinguish between Centralized and Decentralized Filing;
- know about the system of classification;
- understand the concept of paperless office methods of filing; and
- discuss the steps of Filing Procedure

7.1 INTRODUCTION

While talking about filing let's go into the depth of the concept and understand "What is a file used for?". If we try to know the reason behind this question it is well versed that "A file is a container in a computer system for storing information". In a computer there are three types of files;

Filing, Indexing and Publishing

application files, data files, and system files. Files used in computers are similar in features to that of paper documents used in library and office files.

7.2 MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF FILING

Filing refers to storing documents in a secure place and being able to locate them quickly and conveniently. This way the documents are less likely to tear, become misplaced, or get dirty. It is a central record-keeping mechanism of any organization. It aids you in being more systematic, organised, transparent and efficient.

In the age of paperless offices, you may think you need to convert all your physical records to electronic data that eventually rests on a variety of offline and online networks. Whether it is on the advice of your technology vendors, or due to newer mandates introduced in federal, state or industry-specific legislations, you may transfer vast amounts of personal, financial and business information onto the cloud. Many businesses have already shifted to the paperless office, or close to it. With online cloud-based storage systems, and digital transactions replacing cash, paperless may be the new normal. Even government agencies are getting onboard. The IRS now accepts digital images or paper copies of scanned items including:

- Cash receipts
- Bank statements
- Cancelled cheque
- Credit card statements

7.3 ESSENTIALS OF A GOOD FILING SYSTEM

The following are the chief characteristics of a good filing system:

- 1. **Simplicity:** The system should be simple so that the employees concerned may operate it without any difficulty.
- **2. Accessibility:** The system should enable files to be easily located and papers to be inserted in files without disturbing the arrangement.
- **3.** Compactness: The filing section should occupy reasonable space in view of the cost implication of large space.
- **4. Economy:** The cost of installation and operation of the system should be proportional to the benefits derived from it.
- **5. Flexibility:** The system should be capable of expansion as the activities of the organization expand.
- **6. Safety:** The records should be safe and available whenever they are needed. There should not be any danger regarding insects, rain and mishandling.

- **7. Retention:** There should be a well-defined policy of retaining or discarding the papers and records. Material no long required must be discarded periodically.
- **8.** Classification: Most suitable method of classification should be adopted. Too many miscellaneous files and bulky files must be avoided.

7.4 OFFICE FILING PROCEDURE

Office Filing Procedure is a set of clearly defined and followed by organisations practices in filing documents and important papers. In general, these are instructions to all the employees regarding actions are to be taken in case of certain situations. Office Filing Procedures can include Employee Job Descriptions, Workplace Etiquette, as well as Certain Confidentiality Protocols. Filing procedure consists of a series of steps to be taken for the preservation and use of paper in an office. But filing procedure varies from organization to organization, according to the volume and complexity of the records and the service requirements. A carefully designed filing procedure is, however, essential for all organizations.

7.5 CENTRALIZED V/S DECENTRALIZED FILING

7.5.1 Centralization

In a centralized organization, the decision-making powers are retained in the head office, and all other offices receive commands from the main office. The executives and specialists who make critical decisions are based in the head office. For example: Apple is an example of a business with a centralized management structure. Within Apple, much of the decision-making responsibility lies with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Tim Cook, who assumed the leadership role within Apple following the death of Steve Jobs.

Advantages of Centralized Filing

- There is no duplication of filing arrangements.
- There is better utilization of storage space.
- Easy location of documents and records are possible.
- There is full utilization of storage space available.

7.5.2 Decentralization

A decentralized network offers a wide range of benefits over the more conventional centralized network, including increased system reliability, scale, and privacy. Examples of decentralized businesses are Hotels, Supermarket, Dress showrooms, etc.



Disadvantages of Decentralization:

- Difficulty in coordination
- Wastage of resources
- Larger interest of the enterprise is neglected
- Delay in decision making
- Lack of qualified managers
- Certain activities in decentralization are not possible

7.5.3 Centralized v/s Decentralized Filing

Files in a centralized records center are controlled exclusively by the entire records department, while files in a decentralized records center are controlled by the end user who creates the files. Unlike a centralized records center, where the files are controlled exclusively by the records department, a decentralized location is controlled by the end user who creates the file.

Check Your Progress A

1.	What is a Filing system?
	THE DEADLE'S
2.	What does simplicity mean in a good filing system?
3.	How does centralization differ from decentralization?

Give an example of decentralized business.	Filing of Documents

7.6 SYSTEM OF CLASSIFICATION

A file classification scheme (also known as a file plan) is a tool that allows for classifying, accessing and retrieving records. It is presented as a hierarchical structure of classification levels and is based on the business activities that generate records in a specific organizational business setting. There are three sorts of filing and classification systems: alphabetical, numeric, and alphanumeric. Depending on the information being filed and classified, each of these filing systems offers advantages and disadvantages. You can also divide each form of file system into subgroups. The most logical, practical, and flexible sort of system for the information involved is used in an effective filing classification system. The following are some of the classification methods:

Alphabetical Topical Filing Systems

4.

Alphabetical topical systems organise information by topic and then file the topic labels alphabetically. This system does not keep related subjects together. When dealing with small amounts of data, this type of method usually works best. A "dictionary" system is a term used to describe this type of file and classification system. When filing personal names, last names are utilised as the primary sorter, with first names used only if the last names are identical.

Alphabetical Encyclopedia Filing Systems

Information is first broken down by main category in a "encyclopaedia" file and classification system, with sub-categories organised alphabetically. This type of filing system is very beneficial for dealing with vast amounts of data since it eliminates the need for users to remember the name of a certain file in order to locate it. Instead, users can seek for a generic category and then search within it for the precise file they require.

Alphabetical Geographic Filing Systems

The alphabetical geographic filing system is a subset of the encyclopaedia filing and classification system. The key categories are divided by locations

in a geographic system. From countries to cities to field offices, you can use any size or type of location. In this type of system, the users begin by selecting the relevant geographic area for their search, then search alphabetically within that topic to get the precise information they are looking for.

Straight Numeric Filing Systems

Straight numeric filing and classification system starts with labeling the first file as number one and each file is labelled with a subsequent number It is very simple to use. However, the usage of this system is limited, because this type of system frequently requires an index to assist users in finding the files they want, and the files which involve high-activity might become congested around the same numeric area.

Duplex Numeric Filing Systems

Files are labelled with numeric labels in duplex numeric filing systems, which require several sets of numbers. This type of file system is capable of dealing with massive amounts of information. The different sets of numbers can correlate to broad categories and subcategories, similar to how an encyclopaedia files and classifies information. One disadvantage of such a system is that understanding what each cluster of numbers refers to necessitates the use of an index. The Dewey Decimal system, which is used by most libraries to catalogue their collections, is an example of a duplex numeric system.

Chronological Filing Systems

Chronological filing systems are a subtype of numeric filing systems in which files are organised by date. Typically, files are organised by year, month, and then day. This is how most correspondence files, such as email lists, are organised, with the most recent data listed first.

Alphanumeric Filing Systems

In alphanumeric filing systems, Information is classified by category in an encyclopedic system utilising both numbers and letters to represent categories. When both letters and numbers are used, a far larger range of categories is available than when only numbers are used. As a result, the alphanumeric Library of Congress filing and classification system allows for a wider range of categories than the Dewey Decimal system, which is confined to ten major categories.

7.7 CONCEPT OF PAPERLESS OFFICE METHODS OF FILING

An effective office filing system is crucial for any business that handles invoices, receipts, and other records, whether on paper or digitally. Even for businesses that don't deal with much paperwork, staying organized and efficient will help keep operations running smoothly. Office filing systems

come in all forms, from the simple cabinet drawer, to complex assortments of digital servers. In order to create a system that works for you, it's important to know which files are more important, who needs the access, and how they can be retrieved easily and efficiently.

Going paperless is digitally storing and arranging all relevant papers and data, rather than physically placing them in a filing cabinet. This not only reduces a significant amount of paper clutter, but it also allows consumers to securely access all of their information directly from their smartphone.

There are various methods of filing by

- Subject or Category.
- Alphabetical order.
- Numbers or Numerical order.
- Places or Geographical order.
- Dates or Chronological order.

7.8 STEPS OF FILING PROCEDURE

The common steps for filing followed in all organizations are given below:

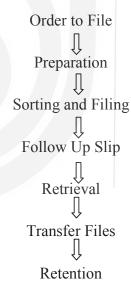


Figure 7.1: Steps of Filing Procedure

Order to File

All documents need not be filed because all papers are not equally important. Hence, a responsible officer should decide whether the record in question is to be preserved or not. Therefore, no document should be filed unless the concerned official orders it to be filed. He should write the order, sign it and put the date. Only such documents should be filed. All unnecessary documents, therefore, shall not get accumulated in the folders.



• Preparation

In preparing the record filing, the record clerk should read the paper and ascertain its filing classification. All related papers should also be attached to the main record. Ruth L.Moore house suggests that they should be stapled in the top left hand corner. The papers should be then punched if they are to be fastened in files or folders. The record should be marked or indexed for classification with a color pencil or by encircling key words or numbers on the record. If necessary, a cross-reference should also be made on the record.

• Sorting and Filing

After coding, indexing and cross-referencing, the papers should be carefully filed in the correct classification. If necessary, the folders should be removed and opened flat and the latest record should be placed on the top. Chronological order is an accepted practice, because this would help the staff to locate the document easily in case of future reference.

Follow Up Slip

Some documents — for instance purchase orders, bills for payments etc. require follow up action. The concerned executive should note the follow up instructions. The filing clerk should then prepare a follow up slip and should attach it to the relevant paper on files. An extra copy of such paper may be kept in the follow up file as a reminder so that the filing clerk can send the required paper to the concerned officer on the specified date.

Retrieval

Whenever any file needed by the executive for any reference, it should be removed from the cabinet only when a written requisition is sent by him. On receipt of the requisition, the filing clerk should prepare an "Out guide" or out card. A notation should be made on the out card as to the date of withdrawal, the name of the person who has withdrawn the file and the approximate date by which it should be returned. The out card is put in the place of the file on the document in the folder, which is removed till the file, or the paper is returned back. The records should be periodically verified say once in two weeks or once in a month and a list of overdue records or files is prepared. Requests should also be sent to the concerned officials who are keeping the file to return them.

Transfer Files

The documents are kept in the file for some time according to the rotation policy of the organization. After their active life is over, they may not be frequently needed. When the life of a document is permanently over and will no longer be required, it can be destroyed. However, certain documents may be alive but they may not be frequently

required. Such files or folders or documents can be transferred and stored in a clean dust proof manner.

Retention

Some documents due to their legal requirements or active use should be retained for a long period. The management should therefore lay down a definite policy of records retention and destruction.

7.9 DIGITALIZATION AND RETRIEVAL OF RECORDS

Digitizing (also known as digital imaging or scanning) is defined as the process of converting any hard- copy, or non-digital record into digital format. This includes digitizing text, photographs, maps, microfilm; converting analogue voice recordings to digital media, etc. If digitization is a conversion of data and processes, digitalization is a transformation. More than just making existing data digital, digitalization embraces the ability of digital technology to collect data, establish trends and make better business decisions. There are various advantages to digitalization including increased efficiency, increased productivity, lower operational costs, improved customer experience, higher agility, enhanced employee morale, improved communication, increased transparency, improved competitive advantage, and faster decision making.

Benefits of Digitized Records for Organizations

- No transcription errors.
- Enhanced Digital Workflow processes.
- Better accessibility to information.
- Faster record retrieval through title tags and meta-description.
- Single source of truth for any litigation, audit or compliance support.
- Strategic move for Big Data handling.

7.10 WEEDING OF OLD RECORDS

Weeding is the act of removing unnecessary files from the active records. The result is significant savings in storage space and faster and more efficient retrieval of information for research purposes. If a record is required in connection with the disposal of another record, the former will not be weeded out until after all the issues raised on the latter have been finally decided, even though the retention period marked on the former may have expired in the meantime.

During the drive each and every file/register/document and other records lying for three years and above may be examined and reviewed and its life span be decided. All files/documents/records, which have become obsolete, should be weeded out as per Procedure laid down.

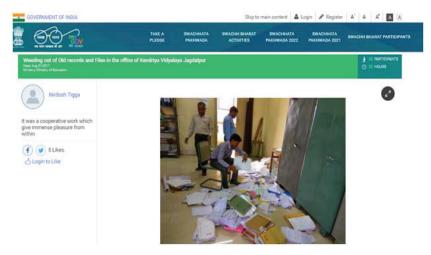


Figure 7.2: Weeding of Old Record https://swachhbharat.mygov.in/challenge/weeding-out-old-records-and-files-office-kendriyavidyalaya-jagdalpur-0

The maintenance, preservation and retirement of records is one of the important functions of the office. The periodic weeding out of records is important to prevent unmanageable growth of old records which occupies precious office space.

Check Your Progress B

Ι.	what is a chronological filing system?
	THE DEADLE'S
2.	What do you mean by retention?
3.	Define digitization.

Filing	of	Document
1 1111112	V.	Document

4.	What do you mean by Retrieval?	rining of Docume

7.11 LET US SUM UP

Filing means keeping documents in a safe place and being able to find them easily and quickly. A filing system is the central record-keeping system for an organization. It helps you to be organized, systematic, efficient and transparent.

The following are the chief characteristics of a good filing system: Simplicity, Accessibility, Compactness, Economy, Flexibility, Safety and Retention.

Office Filing Procedure is a set of clearly defined and pan-organization followed practices in filing documents and important papers. In general, these are instructions to all the employees on what actions are to be taken in case of certain situations, likely or unlikely. Office Filing Procedures can include Employee Job Descriptions, Workplace Etiquette, as well as Certain Confidentiality Protocols.

In a centralized organization, the decision-making powers are retained in the head office, and all other offices receive commands from the main office. The executives and specialists who make critical decisions are based in the head office. A decentralized network offers a wide range of benefits over the more conventional centralized network, including increased system reliability, scale, and privacy. Files in a centralized records center are controlled exclusively by the entire records department, while files in a decentralized records center are controlled by the end user who creates the files.

A file classification scheme (also known as a file plan) is a tool that allows for classifying, titling, accessing and retrieving records. It is presented as a hierarchical structure of classification levels and is based on the business activities that generate records in a specific organizational business setting.

An effective office filing system is crucial for any business that handles invoices, receipts, and other records, whether on paper or digitally. Even for businesses that don't deal with much paperwork, staying organized and efficient will help keep operations running smoothly. There are various methods of filing: filing by subject/category, filing in alphabetical order, filing by numbers/numerical order, filing by places/geographical order and filing by dates/chronological order.



The common steps for filing found in all organizations are order to file, preparation, sorting and filing, follow up slip, retrieval, transfer files and retention.

Digitizing (also known as digital imaging or scanning) is defined as the process of converting any hard- copy, or non-digital record into digital format. This includes digitizing text, photographs, maps, microfilm; converting analogue voice recordings to digital media; etc. If digitization is a conversion of data and processes, digitalization is a transformation. There are various advantages to digitalization including increased efficiency, increased productivity, lower operational costs, improved customer experience, higher agility, enhanced employee morale, improved communication, increased transparency, improved competitive advantage, and faster decision making.

Weeding is the act of removing unnecessary files from the active records. The result is significant savings in storage space and faster and more efficient retrieval of information for research purposes.

7.12 KEYWORDS

Centralization: In a centralized organization, the decision-making powers are retained in the head office, and all other offices receive commands from the main office.

Decentralization: A decentralized network offers a wide range of benefits over the more conventional centralized network, including increased system reliability, scale, and privacy.

Digitizing: Digitizing (also known as digital imaging or scanning) is defined as the process of converting any hard-copy, or non-digital record into digital format.

File classification scheme: It is a tool that allows for classifying, titling, accessing and retrieving records.

Filing: It means keeping documents in a safe place and being able to find them easily and quickly.

Filing system: It is the central record-keeping system for an organization. It helps you to be organized, systematic, efficient and transparent.

Office Filing Procedure: It is a set of clearly defined and pan-organization followed practices in filing documents and important papers.

Weeding: It is the act of removing unnecessary files from the active records.

7.13 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1. What are the chief characteristics of a good filing system?
- 2. What do you mean by Filing? Why is it important?
- 3. What is centralisation? What are its advantages?

- 4. What is decentralization? What are its advantages?
- 5. How is the alphabetical filing system different from the numerical filing system?
- 6. Write a short note on the filing classification system.
- 7. What are the various steps in filing?
- 8. What are the benefits of digitized records for organizations?

Note: These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.



UNIT 8 INDEXING DOCUMENTS

Structure

- 8.0 Objectives
- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Meaning of Indexing
- 8.3 Significance of Indexing
- 8.4 Essentials of a Good Indexing System
- 8.5 Advantages of a Good Indexing System
- 8.6 Types of indexing
 - 8.6.1 Choice of a Suitable Index System
- 8.7 Impact of Indexing in Office Management
- 8.8 Indexing Data Structure
- 8.9 Indexing Websites at Search Engines
- 8.10 Let Us Sum Up
- 8.11 Keywords
- 8.12 Terminal Questions

8.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the meaning and significance of indexing;
- know the essentials and advantages of a good index system;
- know the types of indexing;
- understand the impact of indexing in office management;
- understand indexing data structure; and
- discuss indexing websites at search engines.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Today, everything is done digitally. As the company expands and becomes more contingent on a paperless office system, It should be made sure that the greatest tools and processes are used. This includes two extremely important processes namely, filing and indexing. Indexing is something that should not be overlooked. If done correctly, it will save both time and money in the long run. This unit highlights the benefits of document indexing and its importance in Office Management.

8.2 MEANING OF INDEXING

Indexing is the act of describing or classifying, by index terms, or other symbols. Document indexing is the process of associating or tagging documents with different "search" terms. It is the technique of deciding the name, subject, or other subtitle under which the archives are to be recorded and filed. The process of indexing begins with an analysis of the subject of the document. Indexing helps in the speedy identification of records and archives in the documenting arrangement of the workplace. It does not just aid in the speedy area of the archive, yet additionally, helps in an orderly plan of a record in a document. In the cutting-edge office, indexing assumes a vital part in a documenting framework.

An index is not only essential to big offices but also obligatory to small offices too. When a large number of files are maintained, the necessity of maintaining an index is enlarged. Indexing plays out vital support in documenting capacity and filing function. The index is a demonstrative list utilized for finding a specific report in the documenting gear. Correspondingly, while recording an archive, the list helps the records assistant in following out where the specific paper should be documented. Essentially when countless records are kept up for a variety of purposes, the list is exceptionally significant. An index is something that demonstrates or calls attention to. Good indexing has the following qualities:

- **Simplicity:** It is an essential quality of indexing.
- **Economical:** Being economical is a characteristic of a good indexing system.
- **Flexibility:** Indexing improves the flexibility of the organization.
- Quick location: It should quickly locate required files, records, and documents.

8.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF INDEXING

In our previous unit, we had seen how important filing is. In this unit, we will learn that Indexing is an important aid to filing. Filing and indexing are so interconnected that filing without indexing is imperfect and indexing without filing does not subsist. The prime reason for Indexing is to work with documenting and to facilitate filing. An office gets a few reports every day. Indexing gives a reference rundown of records by names, subject, and date. The required records can be immediately distinguished for the appropriate recording of archives.

Record management conveys huge significance in any organization. Record management is worried about keeping records securely and giving them according to the necessity. Indexing is an instrument of record management that makes it conceivable to figure out the records effectively and rapidly.

Documenting without indexing is insignificant. In this regard, some significances of indexing are as below:

- **1. Easy location:** Indexing calls attention to the required records or documents and works with simple areas and facilitates easy location.
- **2. Saves time and efforts:** Indexing gives the prepared reference to the records and saves the time and endeavors of the workplace.
- **3. Efficiency:** Indexing assists with figuring out the records effectively and rapidly which upgrades the proficiency of the workplace.
- **4.** Cross-reference: A specific record can be kept up in two ways. Indexing works with tracking down such records through cross-reference.
- **5. Reduce cost:** Indexing assists with diminishing the expense of the office by saving time and exertion.

8.4 ESSENTIALS OF A GOOD INDEXING SYSTEM

The principle motivation and purpose for Indexing is to work with documenting and facilitate filing. An office gets a few documents and records on a day-to-day basis. Indexing gives a reference rundown of documents by names, subject and date. The required records can be immediately recognized for legitimate and proper recording of reports. To accomplish these targets objectives, a good system of indexing should have the below features:

- It should be easy to understand, comprehend and be simple;
- In terms of operations, it should be economical;
- It should allow for speed and efficiency;
- It should go well and hand in hand with the system of filing and recording in the organization or association; and
- To allow for expansion, it should be flexible when needed.

8.5 ADVANTAGES OF A GOOD INDEXING SYSTEM

A well-designed good system of indexing that goes well and fits with the filing methods gives the below benefits:

- 1. Easy location: Locating the necessary papers and documents can be easy. No additional time is required. Hence, referencing will not be a painful and tedious process.
- **2. Easy cross-referencing:** A good and well-designed system of indexing also make sure about easy cross-referencing and thus, saves worries and time.

- **3. Economy:** The cost shall be reduced and there's increased efficiency. Hence, a good and well-designed index ensures the economy in records keeping management.
- **4. Make filing easier:** The primary goal of indexing is to make filing easier. Every day, an office receives a large number of documents. Indexing creates a reference list of files based on their names, subjects, and dates. The necessary files can be quickly identified for proper document filing.
- **5. Increase efficiency:** Indexing helps to improve office efficiency. It saves time and effort when looking for documents. It brings smoothness and promptness in office operations. As a result, office employees' productivity improves and office costs are reduced.
- **Maintain privacy:** Another goal of indexing is to maintain privacy. Indexing helps to maintain the confidentiality of office matters. Without an index, it is difficult to locate office files and documents.
- 7. **Systematic filing:** Indexing helps in the development of a systematic filing system. Filing without indexing is incomplete. A filing system in a modern office cannot function without indexing.

Check Your Progress A:

1.	List the qualities of a good indexing system.
	Land Jan The Di
2.	"Indexing gives the prepared reference to the records and saves the time and endeavors of the workplace". Comment.
3.	"A filing system in a modern office cannot function without indexing." Comment

Filing, Indexi	ng and
Publishing	

4.	State the importance of indexing

8.6 TYPES OF INDEXING

Various types of indexes are used in different offices according to their requirements. The main types of indexes are:

- 1. Page Indexing: Page Index consists of a few pages for each alphabet, each with a tab displaying the letter. Each page begins with that letter and quotes the relevant reference, which is usually a number. This type of index is commonly used for minutes, customer and supplier ledgers etc. Page Index can be of two types:
- **Book Index:** A book index is also known as a bound index. In this, an alphabetical index is created in a bound book or register. Pages cannot be misplaced or rearranged because they are bound. Names are entered on each page in the order in which they first appear.
- Loose-leaf book index: A loose-leaf index is one in which pages are held by a device that allows the pages to be removed or additional pages inserted. The sheets of paper are fitted on metal hinges and screwed. When inserting a metal leaf or removing an old leaf, the book is unscrewed and the appropriate sheet is inserted or removed.
- 2. Loose or vertical card indexing: This method assigns separate cards of uniform size to each subject, customer, or document. These cards contain the names and other information to be indexed. These cards are vertically filed and have reference numbers at the top. The cards are filed in some sort of order, such as alphabetical, numerical, or any other appropriate method. They are placed in drawers or boxes of appropriate size. This system is widely used in banks, libraries, hospitals, and offices for a variety of purposes. This indexing type is highly flexible, economical and easy to understand.
- 3. Visible card indexing: Cards are laid flat in transparent covers in a shallow tray or a metal frame in this method. Each card is fitted into metal hinges so that its edge projects the width of one line beyond the edge of the next card. This allows to read one line on each card without having to turn the card. This index is extremely helpful to management in controlling the affairs of the office.

- 4. Strip indexing: This is a type of visible card indexing that is used when the entries are limited to a few lines (Names, addresses etc.). It is made up of a frame into which strips of stiff paper covered in clear plastic can be inserted. Each strip is dedicated to a single correspondent, file, or item. Frames with strips can be hung on the wall or placed on a rotary stand. The strip can be protected from exposure or damage with removable transparent, celluloid or plastic window sheets.
- 5. Wheel or rotary indexing: The wheel or rotary index is a modified form of visible card index. Cards are arranged around the circumference of a wheel, which can be portable or fixed in a cabinet or desk. Entries can be made on the card without removing it from the wheel. A single wheel can hold nearly 5,000 cards, and six wheels can be set up within easy reach of the clerk sitting at his desk. The capacity can be increased further by arranging larger diameter wheels without disturbing the other cards, and scanning the entire card without removing them.

8.6.1 Choice of a Suitable Index System

Not each of index is suitable for every organization. The choice of a suitable indexing system requires is based on the following factors;

- Volume of information;
- The frequency of withdrawals and insertions;
- Nature and number of entries made every day;
- Cost of the equipment;
- Space requirements and the availability of space; and
- The need for the use of signals.

8.7 IMPACT OF INDEXING IN OFFICE MANAGEMENT

Indexing means an arranged system through which the required documents and papers are easily located for the speedy disposal of urgent and/or ordinary matters. The various files are maintained for different departments on various topics. Therefore, an indicator (index) is necessary to locate the files. The goal of indexing is best accomplished when the right kind is decided to file framework. In any case, in different frameworks of grouping, it becomes fundamental to give an index to clients, providers, credit ratings, phone numbers, etc. The index is likewise expected for various types of registers, ledgers, and records. A good procedure and system of indexing, i.e., which works out positively for documenting strategies in the association, provides the following advantages:

• **Trouble-free site:** The necessary papers and records are found essentially with the assistance of their index.

- Easy Cross-Referencing: It guarantees simple cross-referring and thus saves time
- **Lower Costs:** The working expenses of the organization of the records are additionally low because of the better effectiveness of the records administration. Time is not wasted in finding the compulsory archives or papers.
- **Economy Results:** It guarantees speed and thus, the economy results because of the speed.

8.8 INDEXING DATA STRUCTURE

Indexing is a method for streamlining the exhibition of a database by limiting the number of disk accesses required when a question is handled. It is a data structure procedure that is utilized to find and access the information in a database. Indexes are made utilizing a couple of database sections or columns. Indexing is a data structure method to proficiently recover records from the database documents in light of certain traits on which the indexing has been finished. Indexing in database frameworks is like what we find in books. Indexing is characterized in view of its ordering credits.

8.9 INDEXING WEBSITES AT SEARCH ENGINES

Due to virtualization, the office is virtually available or rather we can say it is on the Website and APP. Website indexation is the process by which a search engine adds web content to its index. This is done by "crawling" web pages for keywords, metadata, and related signals that tell search engines if and where to rank content. Indexed websites should have a navigable, findable, and clearly understood content strategy. Website indexing requires downloading data from webpages and storing it in databases by search engines. It is done because the processed data need to display the most relevant results to their users. A website, blog, or new page can be indexed by search engines like google in less than an hour. Further, the sitemap also tells how often to look for changes and new pages on the site.

Check Your Progress B:

1.	What do you understand by indexing data structure?

Indeving	Document
Illuexille	Document

۷.	what is visible card indexing:
3.	Write a short note on website indexing?
4.	List the factors impacting the choice of a suitable indexing system.

8.10 LET US SUM UP

What is visible and indexing?

Today, everything is done digitally. As the company expands and becomes more contingent on a paperless office system, it should be made sure that the greatest tools and processes are used. This includes two extremely important processes namely, filing and indexing. Indexing is the act of describing or classifying, by index terms, or other symbols. Document indexing is the process of associating or tagging documents with different "search" terms. It is the technique of deciding the name, subject, or other subtitle under which the archives are to be recorded and filed. The process of indexing begins with an analysis of the subject of the document. Indexing helps in the speedy identification of records and archives in the documenting arrangement of the workplace. Good indexing has the qualities such as simplicity, economical, flexibility, and quick location.

Filing and indexing are so interconnected that filing without indexing is imperfect and indexing without filing does not subsist. The prime reason for Indexing is to work with documenting and to facilitate filing. An office gets a few reports every day. Indexing gives a reference rundown of records by names, subject, and date. The required records can be immediately distinguished for the appropriate recording of archives. Indexing provides

ease of location, saves time and efforts, promotes efficiency, and cross-referencing, and reduced costs.

The principle motivation and purpose for Indexing is to work with documenting and facilitate filing. An office gets a few documents and records on a day-to-day basis. Indexing gives a reference rundown of documents by names, subject, and date. The required records can be immediately recognized for legitimate and proper recording of reports. A well-designed good system of indexing that goes well and fits with the filing methods gives the various benefits such as easy location, easy cross-referencing, making filing easier, increase efficiency, maintaining the privacy and systematic filing, etc.

Various types of indexes are used in different offices according to their requirements. The main types of indexes are Page Indexing, Loose or vertical card indexing, Visible card indexing, Strip indexing and Wheel or rotary indexing. Indexing means an arranged system through which the required documents and papers are easily located for the speedy disposal of urgent and/or ordinary matters. The various files are maintained for different departments on various topics. A good procedure and system of indexing, i.e., which works out positively for documenting strategies in the association, provides various advantages such as trouble-free site, easy cross-referencing, lower costs, economy results, etc.

Indexing is a method for streamlining the exhibition of a database by limiting the number of disk accesses required when a question is handled. It is a data structure procedure that is utilized to find and access the information in a database. Indexes are made utilizing a couple of database sections or columns. Due to virtualization, the office is virtually available or rather we can say it is on the Website and APP. Website indexation is the process by which a search engine adds web content to its index. This is done by "crawling" web pages for keywords, metadata, and related signals that tell search engines if and where to rank content.

8.11 KEYWORDS

Indexing: Indexing is the technique and procedure of deciding the name, subject, or another subtitle under which the archives are to be recorded and filed.

Page Indexing: Page Index consists of a few pages for each alphabet, each with a tab displaying the letter.

Record management: It is concerned with keeping records safely and providing as per the requirement.

Strip indexing: This is a type of visible card indexing that is used when the entries are limited to a few lines (Names, addresses etc.).

Indexing Documents

Vertical card indexing: This method assigns separate cards of uniform size to each subject, customer, or document. These cards contain the names and other information to be indexed.

Website Indexing: Website indexing is the process of downloading data from web pages and storing it in databases by search engines.

Wheel or rotary indexing: The wheel or rotary index is a modified form of visible card index. Cards are arranged around the circumference of a wheel, which can be portable or fixed in a cabinet or desk.

8.12 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

What is the significance of indexing?

What are the essential qualities of indexing?

State the Advantages of a good indexing system.

State the significance of indexing in office management.

What is Indexing? Discuss the different types of indexing?

Note: These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.



UNIT 9 PUBLISHING DOCUMENTS

Structure

- 9.0 Objectives
- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Meaning of Publishing
- 9.3 Publishing Platforms
 - 9.3.1 Digital Publishing Platform
 - 9.3.2 Social Media Platform
 - 9.3.3 Content Publishing Platform
- 9.4 Published Annual Reports
- 9.5 Portable Digital File (PDF)
- 9.6 Conversion of Document to Word/PDF/JPG
 - 9.6.1 JPG to Word
 - 9.6.2 Image to Doc
 - 9.6.3 DOCX to Word
- 9.7 Animated Publishing in a Multimedia Format
 - 9.7.1 Kindle Direct Publishing
 - 9.7.2 Microsoft Publisher
- 9.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 9.9 Keywords
- 9.10 Terminal Questions

9.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to;

- understand the meaning of publishing and publishing platforms;
- know about the different types of publishing platforms;
- understand the benefits of PDF;
- understand the process of document conversion; and
- understand the concept of Multimedia format

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Technological advancement and user consumption is rapidly changing the world of publishing, and the most recent transformation is happening faster than before. The question is, what lies ahead, and is the publishing platform ready for it? The digital publishing platform is a collection of tools which makes it easier to publish lengthy texts and also the graphic-focused editions, e.g. albums or catalogs) in a digital format, that can be read on computers,

tablets, and smartphones. Publishers are at a difficult crossroads because they must provide material not just for their own needs, but also for "feeds" to an increasing number of publishing platforms. In many ways, these platforms are becoming the new product and delivery formats for publishers. Technology and user consumption are rapidly evolving. Many publishers are scrambling to figure out how to make their material available in a variety of digital forms, including Apple News, Facebook Instant Articles, Adobe DPS articles, and others.

9.2 MEANING OF PUBLISHING

In today's 24-hour culture, investors need to be able to get information quickly. Publishing is the act of providing information, software, music, literature and other forms of content to the general public free of cost or on sale. The term publishing has traditionally been used to describe the development and distribution of printed materials such as books, magazines, and newspapers. It means sharing your work with others. Now, there are three types of publishing in use around the world that you should become familiar with: traditional publishing, self-publishing and hybrid publishing.

9.3 PUBLISHING PLATFORMS

There is a well-known saying that "Your platform has nowhere to go but up with the right marketing strategy". Publishers are typically thought to have editorial judgment, whereas platforms do not. The Harvard Business Review, The New York Times, and The Atlantic are classic "publishers" in this regard, as they deliver highly-curated information and devote a significant amount of effort to its creation. Facebook, which owns Instagram, asserts that it is a platform, citing Instagram as an example of Platforms within the social networking umbrella. Facebook, on the other hand, is a publisher and is responsible for its content. The term "publishing platform" might refer to one of two things. The first, and by far the most popular, definition is the number of individuals an author can reach and persuade to buy their next book. The other is a collection of software and vendor partnerships put together by a would-be Pay to Publishing Company in order to allow authors to pay for their own book's publication.

9.3.1 Digital Publishing Platform

Digital publishing (also known as e-publishing or online publishing) is the process of publishing e-books, magazines, reports, white papers, and other long-form content on the web or on electronic carriers. Articles and flipbooks are both included in digital publishing. Both are perfectly viable ways for readers to consume their favorite publications, and digital publishers must adapt and offer their audience the format that best suits their needs. A digital publishing platform, in simple terms, is a programme that allows you to effortlessly publish your material digitally. Consumers in today's society

expect instant access to the things they require and enjoy. Digital media is also included in this. At the time when social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter were making their imprint on the internet, News platforms like Huffington Post were creating a new path. Publishers are currently struggling to stay relevant as they learn to adapt. If you publish in print media, you should be aware of the rapid changes that are affecting your sector. It's time to start looking for digital publishing platforms. We also know that digital publication can take many other forms, including online periodicals and e-books.

Websites, blogs, and social networking platforms are all examples of digital technology, as well as games, CDs, films, applications, and other downloadable materials – even a simple text message is a type of digital publication marketing. Digital publishing, on the other hand, enables the authors to create right content for the readers.

Advantages of Digital Publishing

- Cost-Effective
- Eases the Process of Book Creation
- Interactive Reading Experience
- Editing Is Possible Even After Publishing
- Analyze Distribution and User Behavior
- Wider Reach

Disadvantages of Digital Publishing

- It is not Free.
- Lack of Control.
- Boredom.
- Streamlined Publishing.
- Information can be wrong.
- It Requires Computing Equipment

Examples of digital publishing software

- Quark A Saas platform that allows digital publishing, content distribution and management.
- Kitaboo Digital Publishing Platform is a cloud-based digital publishing platform that helps in creation, publication, and distribution of interactive mobile-ready content.
- Joomag. An all –in one digital publishing platform to create, distribute, engage and measure interactive digital publications.
- Readz.



- Zmags.
- Mag Loft.
- YUDU.

9.3.2 Social Media Platform

According to the analysis by Kepios, there are more than 4.62 billion social media users worldwide in January 2022, accounting for 58.4 percent of the global population. In addition, the number of people using social media has increased dramatically in the last year, with 424 million additional users joining since this time last year. While the phrases "social media" and "social network" may appear to be synonymous, they are not. In essence, social media is a platform for disseminating information, whereas social networking is a platform for communication.

Various Types of Social Media

- Social Networking
- Photo Sharing
- Video Sharing
- Interactive Media
- Blogging/Community Building

Examples and functioning of Social Media Platforms

- YouTube: YouTube is also considered as a social media platform.
 Furthermore, it is the second most used search engine after Google.
 Every day, users watch a billion hours of video on YouTube, which is a video-sharing network.
- **Instagram:** Instagram has long been the home of bloggers, influencers, brands, small business owners, friends and everyone in between. It has over 1 billion monthly users.
- **Facebook**: Facebook is the most popular social networking platform, with over two billion monthly users.
- WhatsApp: WhatsApp Business allows firms to provide customer service and communicate updates about their purchases with their customers.

9.3.3 Content Publishing Platform

The heart of a modern tech stack is a content platform. It collects, organizes, and distributes content across a company's digital footprint. It features adaptable APIs that let companies create engaging experiences across markets and media.

Types of content

Blog Posts/Articles

- White Papers, eBooks, and Reports
- Podcasts
- Email Newsletter/Nurturing Campaigns
- Videos
- Thought Leadership or POVs
- Infographics

Check Your Progress A

1.	What is Publishing?
2.	Give examples of digital publishing software
	THE PEOPLE'S
3.	Give examples of various types of social media?
	ONIVERSIII
4.	Give three examples of social media platforms.

9.4 PUBLISHED ANNUAL REPORT

An annual report is a document that public companies are required to publish to their shareholders every year. It summaries their activities and financial position. The annual report is released at the end of the financial year. "Who writes yearly reports?" is now the question. Many publicly traded companies either prepare their annual reports in-house or outsource them to large accounting firms, professional writing agencies, and graphic artists who develop eye-catching brochures to accompany the reports. One can often find a company's annual reports on the company's website that contains information for investors.

- Financial figures, statements from the CEO and Board Chair, and major activities and accomplishments are often included in annual reports. Annual reports are designed to provide a true picture of an organization's activities over the course of a fiscal year.
- Annual reports are detailed publications that give readers information about a company's performance during the previous year. The reports include details such as financial information performance highlights, a letter from the CEO, and future aims and ambitions.

Components of Annual Reports

- Director's message to shareholders.
- Information on corporate governance. read more.
- Financial highlights.
- Management discussion and analysis.
- Shareholding pattern, management/board of directors' information.
- Detailed and audited financial statements.
- Statement of financial position.
- Income statement.

9.5 PORTABLE DIGITAL FILE (PDF)

The Portable Document Format, or PDF, is the first non-physical thing presented: it is a digital file format created by Adobe in 1993 and made available for free. While it was proprietary at the time, the fact that it was free meant that it could be used by anyone, regardless of which systems they possessed or whether they were compatible with one another. Adobe released the PDF specifications as an open standard in 2008, effectively making it a non-proprietary file format. PDF (Portable Document Format) is a file format that has captured all of the elements of a printed document as an electronic image that can be viewed, navigated, printed, or forwarded to others. PDF files are made with Adobe Acrobat, Acrobat Capture, or similar products.



Figure 9.1: Acrobat

Source: Acrobat

PDF is an open, standardized, and widely-competent digital document technology that has proven to be capable of bridging the gap between paper and electronic documents. Advanced information, authentication, semantic tagging, attachments, 3D, and other characteristics of PDF provide a strong foundation for future development of digital documents.

Portable Document Format (PDF) is an open file format for transferring electronic documents. PDF-encoded documents, forms, photos, and web pages can be viewed on any device, including smartphones and tablets. To support workflows that require these characteristics, the PDF specification additionally includes encryption and digital signatures, file attachments, and metadata.

Advantages of PDF

- Graphic Integrity: No matter what operating system, device, or software application is used to view a PDF, the content and layout remain the same.
- The PDF is now an open standard, maintained by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). PDF documents can contain links and buttons, form fields, audio, video and business logic. They can be signed electronically and you can easily view PDF files on Windows or Mac OS.
- Multi-Dimensional
- Convenient
- Secure
- Compact

9.6 CONVERSION OF DOCUMENT TO WORD/PDF/JPG

Anyone may convert Word, Excel, PowerPoint...(doc, xls, ppt...), image formats like TIFF, JPG, HEIC, and many others to PDF, PDF/A, or Image with the Online Document Converter. The following are some of its benefits:

- There's no need to download anything; simply upload the file and choose your delivery option.
- The document will look precisely like the original, regardless of any device it is displayed on.
- The programme has an easy-to-use interface: simply drag and drop your files, choose an output format, and click Start.
- The output files will retain the original files' structure, page layout, text formatting, fonts, and hyperlinks after conversion.

9.6.1 JPG to Word

JPG is one of the most common and helpful formats for organizing and sharing pictures on the internet. People from all over the world choose this format for uploading and sharing photos on the web and social media. Its compact size is one of the reasons for its popularity. However, there is a drawback to this format: you cannot add or edit anything in it. It is also simple to duplicate a person's JPG file without his or her permission because it lacks security safeguards. Word, on the other hand, is the greatest and most secure document handling and sharing format. The teachers, researchers, students, bankers, or people from almost every other field of life prefer this format to transfer data from one device to another through the web. This format gives you the most flexibility when it comes to making modifications to your data.

9.6.2 Image to DOC

Converting JPEG to Word is a time-consuming operation, but you can save time by using our online JPG to Word converter. The steps below will show you how to utilize this jpg to doc converter without any difficulty. You can use this tool to upload your images by clicking the "Upload" button, or you can use the "From Dropbox" button to upload your JPG from your cloud storage drive. To begin the conversion process, click the "Convert to Word" button after you've uploaded your file.

9.6.3 DOCX to WORD

DOCX is an XML based word processing file developed by Microsoft. DOCX files are different from DOC files as DOCX files store data in separate compressed files and folders click the "choose files" button to select your Docx files. Clik the "Convest to word" button after uploading the file.



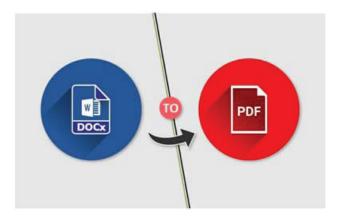


Figure 9.2: Converting Word Doc to PDF

9.7 ANIMATED PUBLISHING IN A MULTIMEDIA FORMAT

In our previous course BCOS-183: computer application in business we have learnt about Multimedia in Detail. In this unit we will go through the application aspects about Animated Publishing in a Multimedia Format. Multimedia refers to content that uses a combination of different content forms. This contrasts with media that use only computer displays such as text-only or traditional forms of printed or hand-produced material. Multimedia includes a combination of text, audio, still images, animation, video, or interactivity content forms. Multimedia is usually recorded and played, displayed, or accessed by information content processing devices, such as computerized and electronic devices, but can also be part of a live performance.

9.7.1 Kindle Direct Publishing

Amazon.com's e-book self-publishing platform is called Kindle Direct Publishing. Free self-publishing of eBooks, paperbacks, and hardback books is possible with KDP. We provide you with direct access to your book on Amazon as well as the ability to construct a product description page for it. In addition, Amazon's self-publishing tool, Kindle Direct Publishing, or KDP, allows authors to sell their books to Amazon's large audience without having to go through a traditional publishing house. Authors can generate ebooks and paperback books using KDP without incurring any upfront expenditures or placing inventory orders.



Figure 9.3: Amazon Kindle Source: Amazon

9.7.2 Microsoft Publisher

Microsoft Publisher is a Microsoft desktop publishing application that differs from Microsoft Word it focuses on page layout and design rather than text production and proofing. The ability of Publishers to combine text and images to create professional-looking flyers, brochures, handouts, and newsletters is one of its strongest features. Microsoft Publisher includes a built-in mail merge tool that allows you to deliver your publications to a large number of people with ease. You'll be able to send any document type you generate right from Microsoft Publisher, whether it's a PDF file or an HTML website.



Figure 9.4: Microsoft Publisher

Publisher 2017 is the most recent version in use, and it is included in the Office 2017 suite. The Microsoft Publisher tool allows you to create graphically rich and professional-looking publications. The Publisher is an application for desktop publishing. Publisher is a great application for making visually appealing, professional-looking publications without having to invest a lot of money or time in a complicated desktop publishing programme. Using Publisher on your PC you can:

- Print the layout content or publish online choosing a wide range of predesigned templates.
- Simple items such as greeting cards and labels can be made.
- Create difficult projects such as professional email newsletters, catalogs, and yearbooks.

Check Your Progress B

1.	What is a published annual report?

Filing,	Indexing	and
Publisl	ning	

2.	What are the advantages of PDF?
3.	What are the benefits of an Online Document Converter?
4.	What do you mean by Multimedia format?

9.8 LET US SUM UP

The term publishing has traditionally been used to describe the development and distribution of printed materials such as books, magazines, and newspapers. It means sharing your work with others. Now, there are three types of publishing in use around the world that you should become familiar with: traditional publishing, self-publishing and hybrid publishing.

Digital publishing (also known as e-publishing or online publishing) is the process of publishing e-books, magazines, reports, white papers, and other long-form content on the web or on electronic carriers. Articles and flipbooks are both included in digital publishing. Both are perfectly viable ways for readers to consume their favorite publications, and digital publishers must adapt and offer their audience in the format that best suits their needs. Advantages of Digital Publishing include: cost-effective, eases the process of book creation, interactive reading experience, editing is possible even after publishing, analyze distribution and user behavior and wider reach. disadvantages of digital publishing include: It is not free, lack of control, boredom, the strains of device proliferation, streamlined publishing, information can be wrong and it requires computing equipment.

The phrases "social media" and "social network" may appear to be synonymous; they are not. In essence, social media is a platform for disseminating information, whereas social networking is a platform for communication. The heart of a modern tech stack is a content platform. It collects, organizes, and distributes content across a company's digital footprint. It features adaptable APIs that let companies create engaging experiences across markets and media.

An annual report is a document that public companies are required to publish to their shareholders every year. It summaries their activities and financial position. The annual report is released at the end of the financial year. Components of Annual Reports include: Director's message to shareholders, Information on corporate governance, Financial highlights, Management discussion and analysis, Shareholding pattern, management/board of directors' information, Detailed and audited financial statements, Statement of financial position and Income statement.

PDF is an open, standardized, and widely-competent digital document technology that has proven to be capable of bridging the gap between paper and electronic documents. Advanced information, authentication, semantic tagging, attachments, 3D, and other characteristics of PDF provide a strong foundation for future development of digital documents.

Multimedia refers to content that uses a combination of different content forms. This contrasts with media that use only rudimentary computer displays such as text-only or traditional forms of printed or hand-produced material. Multimedia includes a combination of text, audio, still images, animation, video, or interactivity content forms. Multimedia is usually recorded and played, displayed, or accessed by information content processing devices, such as computerized and electronic devices, but can also be part of a live performance.

9.9 KEYWORDS

Content Publishing Platform: It is a platform which collects, organises, and distributes content across a company's digital footprint

Digital Publishing: Digital publishing (also known as e-publishing or online publishing) is the process of publishing e-books, magazines, reports, white papers, and other long-form content on the web or on electronic carriers.

Microsoft Publisher: Microsoft desktop publishing application which has the ability to combine text and images to create professional-looking flyers, brochures, handouts, and newsletters is one of its strongest features

Publishing: Publishing is the act of providing information, software, music, literature and other forms of content to the general public free of cost or on sale.



PDF: The Portable Document Format, or PDF, is the first non-physical thing presented: it is a digital file format created by Adobe in 1993 and made available for free.

Social Media Platform: It is a platform for disseminating information, whereas social networking is a platform for communication.

9.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1. Explain the concept of Digital Publishing Platform.
- 2. Write a short note on Microsoft Publisher.
- 3. What are publishing platforms?
- 4. What is a content publishing platform? What are various types of content?
- 5. Write a short note on Kindle Direct Publishing.
- 6. What are the various advantages and disadvantages of a Digital publishing platform?

Note: These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.



BLOCK 4 MAILING PROCEDURES AND FORMS USED IN OFFICE

BLOCK 4 MAILING PROCEDURES AND FORMS USED IN OFFICE

This is the forth block of the course. In this block you will Learn about mailing procedures and forms used in office.

In offices, forms are widely used for communicating and recording the information. Office Forms and office Stationery are considered as the basic tools of all office operations. Also, it is important that every Office Manager should have sound knowledge of the procedure of handling of mail which is to be followed in an organization. This block has three units, which discuss the office forms, office stationery and mailing procedures.

Unit 10 Office Forms: This unit gives an overview of office forms. It explains the meaning of office forms, their advantages and disadvantages, and the procedure to design them. It also clearly distinguishes between the different types of internal and external forms usually used in an office. including details about the form control.

Unit 11 Office Stationery: This unit on office stationery enlist various stationery items generally used in an office and outline the importance of managing stationery. It also describes the factors usually taken into consideration while selecting office stationery in an office. And explains purchasing principles, purchase procedures and standardization of stationery.

Unit 12 Mailing Procedures: This unit explains the meaning and importance of mail, centralization of mail handling work, the importance of various Mail Room Equipment and accessories and use of Postal Franking Machine. It also highlights procedure of appending Files with Emails and the process of handling of Inward and outward mail.

UNIT 10 OFFICE FORMS

Structure

10.0	Objectives
10.1	Introduction
10.2	Meaning and Significance of Office Forms
10.3	Designing of Office Forms
10.4	Forms used in an Office
10.5	Internal Office Forms 10.5.1 Accounting Forms 10.5.2 Application Forms 10.5.3 Memorandum Forms
10.6	External Contract Forms 10.6.1 For Creditor and Customer 10.6.2 Order Forms
10.7	Different Types of Fields 10.7.1 Contact Field 10.7.2 Custom Field 10.7.3 Field Group 10.7.4 Progress Profile
10.8	Advantages and Disadvantages of using Forms
10.9	Form Control
10.10	Let Us Sum Up
10.11	Keywords

10.0 OBJECTIVES

10.13 Terminal Questions

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

10.12 Answers to Check Your Progress

- know about the meaning of office forms along with its significance;
- design an office form;
- distinguish between the different types of internal and external forms usually used in an office;
- understand common types of fields used in a form;
- identify advantages and disadvantages of using forms; and
- exercise form control.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

We use forms in case we have to open a bank account, apply for admission in college, submit an application for a job opening, book railway reservation tickets, submit house tax application etc. Filling forms has become a fundamental way to obtain information which is crucial for completion of a task. In every office, forms are used widely to receive and record the desired information. Forms which are properly designed and filled are helpful not only to those who fill the information but also to the one who examines the information. In other words, a perfectly designed form should facilitate users to fill up quickly the required information with no confusion in mind. In an office, every department usually designs forms which are unique according to its functional areas so as to obtain essential but restricted information.

Due to Covid 19 Pandemic, as we all know, digital transformation is one of the major technological trends, which the organizations have observed. Accordingly, various office systems and work flows have changed so as to reduce corona virus transmission risk. As there is evidence that the virus can live on paper surfaces for a considerable period of time, use of paper-based forms have become minimal in office work. With the support of IT systems and processes, the companies are collecting and processing information. Further, as Paperless Office always enjoys benefits viz. efficiency, higher productivity, less errors, economy and so on, E-forms have gained wide acceptance to transmit and receive information.

10.2 MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE OF OFFICE FORMS

A form is defined as an arranged format which contains standardized and structured document having blank spaces for entering information. Forms are needed in order to receive the required information which is to be used to take desired action. Forms have proved to be very useful to reduce administrative overheads and are considered to be a tool for the office administrators. Information may be received and used in two types of forms – Paper Forms and E Forms.

Paper forms (also known as Physical Forms) are forms which are printed on paper and are filled manually. For example, to perform banking transactions personally when one visits bank, one has to fill-up required bank forms manually. However, in the era of paperless office, computer generated form also called e-form (electronic form) or web form are widely filled to transmit and receive information in an organization. Format of e-forms resemble paper forms and have a series of fields which web users need to fill online with the help of check boxes, radio buttons, text fields etc.It is evident that a considerable paper work is reduced and speed of operations increased with the use of e-forms. Due to these reasons, filling of on-line form is always preferred over a paper form.

Office Forms

Activity

As web users, if we wish to make an enquiry for a product or service from a commercial organization, the usual practice exercised is either of the two ways:

- a) Fill the Enquiry Form online by using the appropriate links provided by the organization's website.
- b) Download the relevant enquiry form, fill the same, take a print, scan and mail to the email address given at the organizational website.

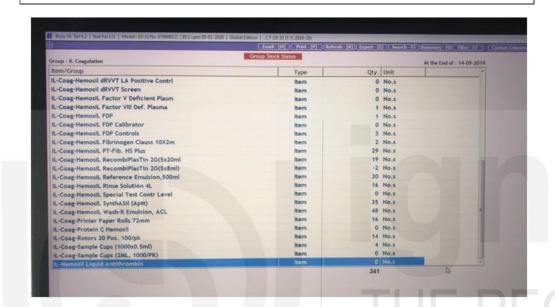


Figure 10.1: Example of an e Form

Significance of Office Forms

Office forms play an indispensable role in management of various administrative tasks professionally and proficiently. Usually, every business organization designs its own office forms according to its specific needs and provides individual recognition to the forms. These customized forms contain organizational logo so as to give unique feel of the company.

Office forms are the basic tool in the hands of administration as they-

- help the user to communicate only limited information
- provide space for writing restricted information.
- ease office operations.
- facilitate generation of multiple copies.
- increase the efficiency and effectiveness of office systems and procedures as carefully designed forms help in speeding up office operations.

E forms enjoy the following advantages:

1. Economy: As there is no cost involved in printing, a lot of money is saved.

- 2. Easy Editing: If at any point of time, the format of the forms is to be changed according to the information sought, designing of forms is easy.
- 3. No Risk of Obsolete Stock: If there is change of format, the already printed stock of paper forms becomes waste. With E forms, there are no chances of stock of forms becoming obsolete.
- 4. Facilitates Convenience to Users: Due to facility of editing of information while filling up the form, E forms are easy to fill.
- 5. No Space Involved in Storage: As forms are stored electronically, no space is used in storing and also, they can be accessed conveniently.
- 6. Confidentiality of Information: E forms maintain confidentiality of information in a better way as they can be protected with password.
- 7. E forms can be e-mailed and, if needed, these forms also help to retrieve search results from a search engine.
- 8. The information on e-forms is generally transferred to a computer data base, which may be processed and analyzed from a statistical point of view, as and when required.
- 9. Facility of printing or downloading of the form, if required.

10.3 DESIGNING OF OFFICE FORMS

Designing of office forms is considered to be both science as well as an art. It is important that before introduction of any new form in a department, approval of the competent authority is obtained. After obtaining the required approval, the process of designing new form in undertaken by the Office Manager. It is always helpful to do thorough study of required particulars which need to be included in the form before finally approving the contents and layout of a new form. The following needs to be emphasized while designing of office forms:

- Ascertaining the objective behind introduction of a new form. In other words, clarifying the specific purpose of the information to be collected.
- Mentioning of a self-explanatory form title.
- Including name and address of the department which is generating the form.
- Identifying the contents to be included in the form. Based on the contents only, the information will be filled.
- Sequencing the information logically from the user's point of view (name followed by contact details and not vice versa)
- Collecting the information that best meets user's needs.
- Providing ample space for filling up of required information.

- Adequate instructions, if required, for filling up the form.
- Simplicity and innovation in designing of forms.
- Appropriate size and overall layout of the form.
- Cost incurred and benefit to be accrued from the introduction of any new form.

In case of paper forms, the following additional points need attention while designing:

- Good quality of stationery to facilitate physical handling.
- Adequate consideration on printing style and color of paper, so that forms look good in appearance particularly when it is to be used by customers
- Retention time period of forms.
- Multiple copies required of the form.

Any carelessness while designing of forms results in heavy financial burden on the organization. It is the duty of the Office Manager to design office forms judiciously to serve the designated purpose so as to make the office operations easy and cost-effective. A well-designed form has visual appeal that not only improves goodwill of the organization but also encourages users to fill the form (particularly important for product inquiries). In offices, before disposing-off any tool or equipment, it is customary to fill the details of the item in a form and obtain required approval from competent authority. A sample of this type of form is given below:

	Stock Iter	ms For		ory Depai		th Of	May, 202	22	96
S. No.	Name of tool/equipment with specification	Store Ledger Folio No.	Name of Supplier	Date of Purchase	Quantity in hand	Unit Price (Rs.)	Total Amount	Reasons for condemnation	Remarks, if any

Note: This is to certify by the Technical Committee that the all the above tools/equipment mentioned have been thoroughly inspected and declared unserviceable and, hence, they may be disposed off.

Signature of Technical Committee

Thus, the basic purpose of introducing any form should be carefully analyzed and thorough examining of all the required information in the form is carried out.

Fixed information and Variable Information

Layout of a form used in an office contain two parts viz fixed information and variable information. Fixed information is that part of information which is essentially required in a pre-determined serial order. For fixed information, space is allocated as per the amount of information required (paper form) or necessary options given for clicking (e form). The information required from the applicant in a form is termed as variable information. However, it is to be ensured that every form should facilitate the applicant to understand and fill the required information against the appropriate columns.

After designing a form, the Office Manager must perform its usability testing. It helps to locate any flaws still left out and do necessary corrections to receive exhaustive and accurate information briefly in the best manner possible.

Check Your Progress A

1.	What do you understand by the term 'Form'?
2.	Write any two points which indicate the advantages of E forms.
	THE BEABLE?
	IINIIV/EDQITV
3.	What points should be emphasized while designing of office forms?

- 4. State whether the following statements are True or False:
 - a) A form is defined as a format which contains standardized and structured document having blank spaces for entering information.
 - b) Usually, business organizations do not design their own office forms.
 - c) Designing of office forms is considered to be both science as well as an art.

- d) It is not the duty of the Office Manager to design office forms judiciously to serve the designated purpose so as to make the office operations easy and cost-effective.
- e) A well-designed form has visual appeal that not only improves goodwill of the organization but also encourages users to fill the form.

10.4 FORMS USED IN AN OFFICE

There are different types of forms which may be necessary in an office to receive information in a ready-made format. Depending on the definite purpose, office forms may be of the following types -

- **a)** Forms on the basis of Functionality: Feedback Form, Enquiry Form, Education Loan Form, Purchase Order Form, Accounting Forms etc.
- **b)** Forms used in Business Transactions: Sale Invoice, vouchers, bills, delivery note etc.
- c) Organizational Forms: Forms used within the organization viz. Leave application form, Tour Advance Form, Medical Reimbursement Form, Performance Appraisal Form, Office Supplies Requisition Slip etc.
- d) E Forms: E Forms are available online and filled electronically.
- e) Paper Forms: Paper forms are filled manually by writing or on typewriters.
- f) Single Copy Form: One form is resource in itself to supply the information. E.g. application forms filled for recruitment.
- **g) Multiple Copy Form:** The form is used when two or more copies filled-in information is needed by different departments for necessary action. E.g. sale invoice, delivery note etc.
- h) Continuous Paper Forms: They are fan-folded forms with perforations meant for automatic feeding and removing. When invoices, cash receipts etc. are to be generated repeatedly, continuous paper forms are used.

10.5 INTERNAL OFFICE FORMS

Internal office forms, also called organizational forms, are designed specifically to meet the needs of day-to-day working within the organization. These forms are used so as to facilitate the management and staff to communicate and provide information speedily. As also stated above, leave application form, provident fund advance form, festival advance form, performance appraisal form, income tax calculation form etc. are internal office forms.

There are different types of forms required specific to each department due to varied departmental activities in an organization, which include purchase, production, finance, personnel, research & development, marketing, etc. Further, some forms are simple and of routine nature and do not require any sensitive information to be filled in. However, when there are security issues with some of the information in the forms, great care is exercised while handling with these forms.

Now-a-days, many companies facilitate its employees with the access of e-forms at company's portal, which can be used with the login-id provided to them. Internal office forms, if required, can also be downloaded from the organizational website. It may be noted that all Internal office forms have personalized and professional design with organization's name and logo, standard format, exhaustive important fields which need to be filled for providing information, enough blank space to fill up information, correct sequencing and layout and facility of printing or downloading of the form, if required.

In this section, we will learn about widely used internal office forms viz. Accounting Forms, Application Forms and Memorandum Forms.

10.5.1 Accounting Forms

Various types of Accounting Forms usually used in an organization are:

- Daily/Weekly/Monthly Work Sheet Form
- Pay Slips
- Tour Advance/Tour Claim Form
- Request for Advance/withdrawal from Provident Fund
- Income Tax Form
- House Building Advance Form
- Medical Reimbursement Form
- Leave Travel Concession Forms
- Advances for Purchase of Motor car/ Motor cycle/Personal Computer Form
- Reimbursement of Conveyance Charges
- Financial Ratios and Analysis Forms
- Depreciation and Amortization Forms, etc.

Common Form Templates

1. Calculation Form

This is calculation form template which is used in an organization when we have to perform a lot of mathematical calculations. Here, respondent gets an opportunity to see totals of previous number entries which facilitates when placing an order with multiple products, tracking expenses, invoice details and estimating costs.

2. Audit Form

This form template is used when we have to conduct financial audits to manage and record audit results. With this audit reports can be submitted online.

The above forms can be customized i.e., we can add a file, upload field, include our organization's logo etc.

10.5.2 Application Forms

Application forms are critically important to all companies, schools, colleges, NGOs etc. and are generally used in Human Resource Department in an organization. Various types of Application Forms which are usually used include:

- Leave Application Form
- Job Resignation Form
- Performance Appraisal Form
- Job Description Form
- Stationery Requisition Form
- Application to seek Permission to Visit Abroad
- Registration Form to attend Seminars, Conferences etc.
- Nomination of Provident Funds/Pension
- Employees' database forms (to record personal information usually in a form template viz. personal and job-related information)
- Background Check Application forms etc.



PERFORMA FOR LEAVE APPLICATION

- 1) Employee Name:
- 2) Designation:
- 3) Department /Branch:
- 4) Type of Leave applied for (Whether Earned Leave/Medical Leave, Half Pay Leave Maternity leave):
- 5) Period of Leave:
- 6) Date since leave is requested:
- 7) Whether station leave required:
- 8) Address during leave:
- 9) Details of last leave:
- 10) Reasons for leave:

Signature of Employee along with Date in case of paper form

Recommendations of Branch In-charge/ Head of office

Signature of Competent Authority in case of paper form

10.5.3 Memorandum Forms

These are feedback forms which good organizations use to take feedback from their employees, customers and public to create/maintain corporate image, increase efficiency and effectiveness, have better working atmosphere etc. Feedback templates are customized forms to capture all relevant information.

10.6 EXTERNAL CONTRACT FORMS

External Contract Forms, also called business forms, are usually based on organizational basic functionality. These are needed for survival and growth of business.

In a commercial organization, the external contract forms may be purchase orders, partnership agreements, loan agreements, invoices, cash receipts etc. For an educational institution, forms are required to be filled for admission, submission of fee, examination, scholarship, refund of security etc. In an organization, these forms are available for all types of office functions and communications.



Different types of External Contract Forms usually used in a commercial establishment are discussed below:

10.6.1 For Creditors and Customers

In business transactions, usually some product or services are sold on credit and money owed by one or more debtors. Now-a-days, specially designed business software is used which are incredibly simple to follow up pending payments. The form templates include customer information, order and invoice details, product specification, due date of pending payment, advance payment made by the customer, if any, and other important details. In other words, the templates help to keep a track of money due over from our debtors by sending reminders. These forms can also be customized to fit specialized business needs.

10.6.2 Order Forms

Order Forms also called Service Forms are efficient way to place and receive orders in business world. It is easy to use online request forms for making inquiries and placing an order on supplier's specially created order forms. Whether you wish to buy LCD or order a Pizza online, order can be placed in no time on web. All business forms have very high security standards.

It should be remembered that records of all business forms should be maintained securely if an organization wishes to survive and grow its operations. This becomes essentially important in case a dispute develops between the supplier and buyer at a later date.

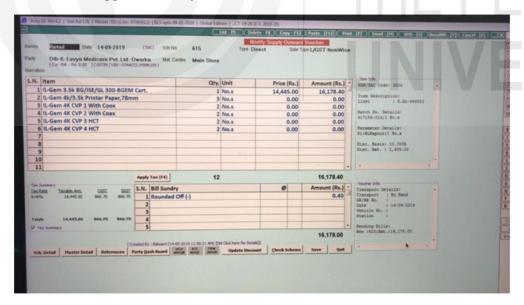


Figure 10.2: Example of an Order Form

10.7 DIFFERENT TYPES OF FIELDS

An E-form has a structured and standardized set of related user input fields. Input fields allow users to fill data in a form. For user inputs, there are various types of input fields which are given as under-

- Text field
- Password field
- Check box
- Drop-down field
- Date pickers
- Radio buttons (to help user select one of a limited number of choices) etc.

When we collect 'Personal Information' from the employees, we may use the above fields.

Personal Information

Name :
Father's Name :
Date of Birth :
Address :
Phone :
E mail :

While E-form designing, it is essential to select those type of fields which have the following features:

- It should have Minimum number of clicks required to complete the form.
- It should help the user to understand the next step once the previous one is completed.
- There should be a smaller number of optional fields.
- It should clearly give distinction between essential and optional fields. It is a practice to use asterisk (*) in red colour to indicate essential fields.

It is always better to split a long form into two or more steps to facilitate the user while filling the same. In this section, we will discuss Contact Field, Custom Field, Field Group and Progress Profile.

10.7.1 Contact Field

Contact fields are the most commonly used fields in E-forms, which give information about the contact details of the applicant such as name and address viz. street, city, country. Various fields are merged in contact fields to pre-populate with the information from a contact's record. Pre-populate means an answer is pre-selected or has a pre-defined text or numerical value, when user uses a form.

10.7.2 Custom Field

Custom field helps a user to have new extra fields to fill in, if required. When creating a new field, the security settings just make the field visible to web form users. Thus, we can add a group or two or three fields side by side to fill the information that is important.

10.7.3 Field Group

Many a times, in forms, we need to fill a standard set of fields such as First Name, Last Name, Email Address and Pin Code. For this purpose, in web forms, we create pre-configured groups which allow the user to add the fields at once so that we do not have to recreate the groupings each time we design a form. An example of a Field Groups-

- Basic Contact Information: First Name, Last Name, Mobile number and Email Address
- Address Field Group: Address 1, Address 2, City, State or Province, Zip or Postal Code, and Country

10.7.4 Progress Profile

Progress Profile helps the user by guiding through a number of steps required to complete a form. It is done with the help of Progress Trackers (also called Progress Indicators) which display progress through a sequence by breaking it up into multiple logical and numbered steps. Thus, the user knows the sequence which is to be completed of a specified task while filling the form besides the current step being used i.e., the current location within the process of filling the form.

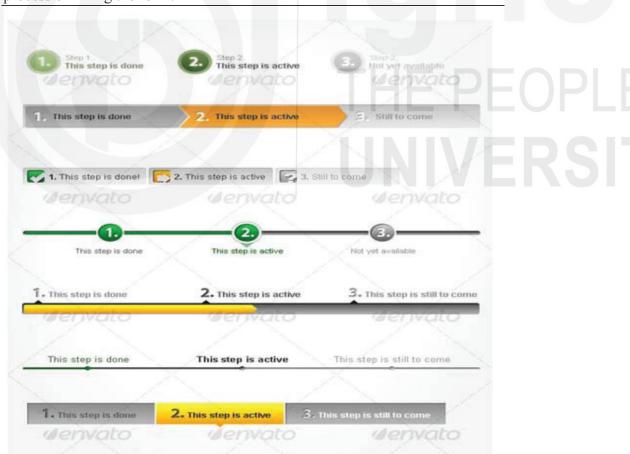


Figure 10.3: Progress Tracker

We often come across above Progress Trackers while filling e-forms.

Check Your Progress B

1.	What do you understand by the Organizational Forms?
2.	Give examples of any four types of Application Forms.
3.	Write the various types of input fields.
4.	What do you understand by Progress Trackers?
	THE PEOPLE'S
	TIMIWEBRITY

10.8 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF USING FORMS

As stated, a form helps the user to fill the data without much difficulty thus reducing a lot of clerical work as only the required information is submitted and collected briefly. A paper form is a document which has spaces to write while in an e form, we have to usually select a field to submit similar contents.

Advantages of Office Forms

- 1. Only the required, necessary and relevant information sought is submitted and received by the sender and receiver respectively.
- 2. Collection of information is quite convenient as the user submits the information according to the known format. There is no need to write down the matter as only brief and meaningful information is supplied. Thus, there is quick supply of information.

- 3. Reduction in clerical work and more output as there is standardized format to receive information.
- 4. Signed paper forms and as well as digitally signed E-forms, both are legally binding in case of any dispute at a future date.
- 5. Forms deliver more business as they are convenient to use for making enquiries thus providing better customer service.
- 6. Workflow is automated as the relevant E-forms are sent to the concerned employees in the organization directly for further processing. For example, leave applications are directly sent to HR, purchase inquiries to Sales Department., income tax forms to Accounts Department. etc.
- 7. E forms help in integrating the data with other business databases in the organization thus sharing, storage and retrieval of information is easy.
- 8. As E-forms have the facility of auto-population fields based on data earlier entered, there are less chances of errors and more accuracy in data entry.
- 9. E forms usage is a green way of information processing.

Disadvantages of Office Forms

- 1. The designing of paper forms along with its business office software, both requires great time and money.
- 2. A badly designed form leads to confusion in the mind of user.
- 3. Sometimes, the space left blank for filling information is not enough leading to receiving of insufficient information.

10.9 FORM CONTROL

As it is important to have an ideal quantity of forms at all times to facilitate smooth conduct of office operations, Form Control (Inventory Control) is important and is exercised on paper forms. It is necessary to hold control on optimal procurement, proper care and disposing off of all types of paper forms on regular basis. Under stocking and over stocking of forms leads to incurring unnecessary inventory costs. So, Office Manager judiciously needs to decide the optimum level of availability of each type of form all the time. An effective form control system is important due to following reasons:

- a) Administrative operations and workflow system carry on smoothly and uninterrupted due to regular supply of forms.
- b) It reduces unnecessary carrying costs of forms.
- c) Weeding out of obsolete forms is easy.
- d) A well designed and regular availability of required stock helps in enhancement of goodwill of an organization.

A careful study of Economic Order Quantity (EOQ) is to be exercised for a good system of form control. EOQ is an ideal order quantity of forms which an office should store at a time so as to reduce the cost of inventory at a given time. Further, as said, review of available stock levels of forms at regular intervals are important to dispose-off stock which is obsolete and undertake up-gradation, if required.

Check Your Progress C

1.	Mention any two advantages of Office Forms.
2.	What is Form Control?
3.	What do you understand by EOQ?
	THE PEOPLE'S

10.10 LET US SUM UP

In offices, forms are widely used for communicating recording and information. They are the basic tool of all office operations. A form is defined as 'a format which contains structured and standardized document having blank spaces for entering information'. Office forms are a basic tool in the hands of administration as they inform the user to communicate only restricted information, specify space for writing particular information, help to generate multiple copies, facilitate to secure repetitive information and simplify office operations. Once the competent authority approves proposal to introduce a new form, its layout is prepared by the Office Manager.

The process of designing forms involves first clarifying the specific needs of the information to be collected, identifying the information required, sequencing the information logically from the user's point of view (name followed by contact details and not vice versa) and designing the information that best meets your needs. Office forms may be for either internal use by the staff within the organization or for external use by customers/clients or other outside parties. Internal forms may be Accounting Forms, Application Forms or Memorandum Forms. Different External Contract Forms include forms for creditor and customer, order form and purchase order.

A e-form, also called web form has a structured and standardized set of related user input fields. Input fields allow users to fill in a form. For user inputs, there are various types of input fields like Text field, Password field, Check box, Drop-down field, Date pickers and Radio buttons. Contact fields are the most commonly used fields in forms and give information about the contact such as their name and address viz. street, city, country.

Many a times, in forms, we need to fill a standard set of fields such as First Name, Last Name, Email Address and Pin Code. For this purpose, in web forms, we create pre-configured groups which allow the user to add the fields at once so that we do not have to recreate the groupings each time we design a form. Progress trackers (or progress indicators) display progress through a sequence by breaking it up into multiple logical and numbered steps. They guide the user through a number of steps in order to complete a specified task. Only the required and relevant information sought is received and submitted by receiver and sender respectively. Some of the advantages of office forms are collection of information is quite convenient as the user submits the information according to the known format, reduction in clerical work and more output as there is standardized format to receive information etc. However, a badly designed form leads to confusion in the mind of user. Form Control, also called Inventory Control, means optimal procurement, care and disposition of paper forms, regardless of whether it takes place in a manufacturing process or an administrative process.

10.11 KEYWORDS

Contact fields: Contact fields are the most commonly used fields in forms and give information about the contact such as their name and address viz. street, city, country.

Custom field: Custom field helps a user to have new extra fields to fill in, if required.

Fixed data: It is that part of information which is essentially required in a pre-determined serial order. For fixed information, space allocated as per the amount of information required or necessary option given for clicking.

Form: A form is defined as 'a format which contains structured and standardized document having blank spaces for entering information'.

Form Control: Form Control means optimal procurement, care and disposition of paper forms, regardless of whether it takes place in a manufacturing process or an administrative process.



Organizational Forms: These forms are designed specifically to meet the needs of day-to-day working within the organization. They facilitate the management and staff to communicate and provide information speedily.

Progress Trackers: Progress trackers (or progress indicators) display progress through a sequence by breaking it up into multiple logical and numbered steps. They guide the user through a number of steps in order to complete a specified task.

Variable Information: The information required from the applicant of the form is termed as variable Information.

10.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress A

- 4. (a) True
 - (b) False
 - (c) True
 - (d) False
 - (e) True

10.13 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1. Discuss the meaning and significance of Office Forms.
- 2. "Effective designing of office forms is both science and art." In the light of the statement, mention the points to be kept in mind while designing office forms.
- 3. What are the common types of forms used in a business organization?
- 4. Differentiate between Internal and External Office Forms giving examples of each type.
- 5. What is a Field Group? Explain with the help of an example.
- 6. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using forms in an organization.
- 7. What do you understand by an Electronic Form? Also mention its advantages.
- 8. What do you understand by Form Control?
- 9. Why filling on-line forms is popular now-a-days?

Note: These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.

UNIT 11 OFFICE STATIONERY

Structure

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Types of Stationery Used in Office
- 11.3 Importance of Managing Stationery
- 11.4 Selection of Stationery
- 11.5 Essential Requirement for a Good System of Dealing with Stationery
- 11.6 Purchasing Principles
- 11.7 Purchase Procedure
- 11.8 Standardization of Stationery
- 11.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 11.10 Keywords
- 11.11 Terminal Questions

11.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- enlist various stationery items generally used in an office;
- outline the importance of managing stationery;
- describe the factors usually taken into consideration while selecting office stationery in an office;
- mention a good system of dealing with stationery;
- develop effective stock control system;
- understand purchasing principles;
- devise plans regarding the purchase of stationery; and
- know about the need of standardization of stationery in an office.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Office stationery is used for day-to-day administrative work in every office, whether big or small. It includes the basic tools and utilities which one needs to perform the task of writing or any other office items such as note pads, papers, visiting cards etc.

Though due to era of Paperless Office and advent of smart phones/laptops, there is radical reduction in the use of various stationery items but many of them still have been used to improve efficiency and effectiveness in our

everyday work in office. In the digital world too, many of the stationery items viz. pen, pencil, markers, slip pad, paper clips, scissor, stapler etc. occupy the most deserved space on our office tables. Hence, proper control and management of stationery items is quite essential to ensure its availability at all times.

Though Covid 19 lockdown had declined the traditional demand for office stationery as every administrative work shifted to digital mode. There was no consumption of stationery as all the meetings and mail work completely shifted to online mode. It is important to note here that virtual office which had become a new reality has stayed even after lockdown and digital transformation is here to remain. Now, every office is not a place but has become a functional area to perform various administrative and management functions. In the present scenario, though we have been observing definitely a sharp decline in use of stationery but, however, its use will never go out of place in every office.

11.2 TYPES OF STATIONERY USED IN OFFICE

Every department in an office is using certain essential stationery materials like files, folders, planners, pens, pencils, sharpeners, paper, business card, post-it notes etc. However, the list of essential stationery items may vary according to specific business needs. For example, an educational institution essentially needs items like note books, drawing books, graph paper, geometry boxes, chart paper, glue, school bags, ruled papers, registers etc.

Here, it is important to understand the difference between Stationery and Office Supplies. Office supplies include any item which is required for smooth conduct of office work; like Computer, Furniture, and Office Machines viz. Photocopier/Paper Shredder/Mailing Machine/Printer etc. besides general stationery items. However, the stationery includes items which are required in day-to-day work and have generally low-cost budget as compared to office supplies. In other words, office supplies include stationery too but stationery does not include items like computer, furniture, printer etc.

According to the nature of organizational work, various types of stationery items are used in an office. Whether big or small, following type of stationery items are used in every type of organization:

- Papers: Though there is paperless era, but still paper is used to some extent in every office. An office needs paper generally for conducting correspondence and taking notes. Letterheads, photocopier paper, registers, printed invoices, notepads etc. are usually used in every business organization to carry out office work.
- Writing tools: In a workplace, pens, pencils, permanent markers, sketch pens, printer cartridges etc. are used almost by everyone in the office.
- Files and Folders: An office needs various types of files like box files,

- lever arch files, etc. and folders viz. presentation holders, magazine holders, document binders etc. for record management,
- Diaries: Desk Diaries are often used to write important notes, prepare work schedules and remember important dates.
- Desk Calendar: It is available on every official's office table for quick reference.
- Calculators: Calculating machines are used in an office to perform speedy and accurate calculations.
- Other commonly needed stationery items include pen drives, scissors, stapler, paper weight, scale, glue, sticky slip, pen holder, paper tray, paper clip, awl pin, stamp pad, highlighter, white board marker, letter opener etc. for routine office work regularly.



Figure 11.1: Office Stationery

Due to affordability factor, many of the branded stationery items are also used by business organizations as corporate gifts.

It is the duty of the Office Manager to ensure not only the availability of right type of stationery in the office but also its adequate quantity to facilitate office staff to carry out their work effectively and efficiently.

11.3 IMPORTANCE OF MANAGING STATIONERY

Managing stationery appropriately is one of the key jobs of an Office Manager. Though it occupies a small amount of an organizational budget but still it is an important area of office management as there is always need to use resources optimally and control expenses.

Good and impressive stationery being used in an organization not only

enhances goodwill of the organization but also many a times proves to be economical in long run. It is necessary to continuously manage the supplies of stationery in an organization according to any alteration in the existing goals, size, nature, and work schedules etc. of the organization and expansion of office operations. Proper management of the stationery items helps in controlling stationery costs while defective management may lead to losses. Thus, Office Manager should not make a hasty decision while purchasing stationery items as it is extremely important to manage use of stationery in order to –

- Cut unnecessary cost
- Ensure safety from leakages, spoiling, theft, pilferage, moisture etc.,
- Ensure adequate and timely availability of stationery at all times
- Provide accurate type of stationery to carry out work
- Ensure always enough buffer stock
- Check on wastage of stationery items, if any.

While managing the use of stationery, following points should be kept in mind:

- Periodical review of existing items of stationery being used to find out their suitability i.e., eliminate the obsolete and useless stationery.
- Avoid misuse of stationery.
- Put efforts on improving the existing quality of stationery, if needed.
- Ascertain absolute necessary desired stationery items of particular quality and quantity.
- Reuse of old stationery wherever possible so as to reduce costs. In other words, optimum usage of stationery is essential. For example, using the paper on both sides while taking print outs.

An Office Manager should make a judicious decision and invest only on those stationery items which are absolutely necessary in the organization after a detailed study.

It is imperative that a well-defined system should exist in every organization to plan and execute the purchase of every new stationery item required by the departments. The main objectives which need to be achieved while introducing any additional item of stationery should be critically analyzed before taking decision to go ahead with the purchase process.

11.4 SELECTION OF STATIONERY

Selection of stationery involves choosing right type of stationery taking into account right quality and right quantity. The two important factors to be kept in mind are the nature of business i.e., type of work which needs to be

performed in an organization and its financial position.

Office Manager needs to be vigilant and gain enough knowledge about reputed suppliers of stationery and wherever possible, collect samples before taking decision to place bulk orders. As far as possible, branded products need to be selected as they prove to be economical in the long run. So, a lot of effort and time is to be invested in order to ensure good quality of stationery at economical prices. Extra care is required while choosing stationery for the office records which need to be preserved for a long period of time to avoid weathering effects. So, the paper, files, folders etc. should be of high quality to keep the information intact. Thus, it requires methodical selection and decision making.

A Store Officer is usually In-charge of Store Department and Store Keeper is responsible to issue stationery items to the office employees and maintain all relevant records relating to Store Department.

Following factors are usually taken into consideration while selecting office stationery in an office:

- 1. Cost Effectiveness: Office Manager needs to take care of the budget and put lot of efforts to ensure supply of stationery at a competitive price.
- 2. Utility: Accurate and appropriate supply of stationery facilitates office employees in performance of work effectively and efficiently.
- **3. Durability:** Durability should not be compromised for the sake of economy in prices. The records, when to be used as documentary evidence at a later date, needs superior quality of stationery.
- **4. Quality:** As far as possible, good and branded stationery should be used for office work as this enhances corporate image.

Check Your Progress A

1.	Why is it important to manage stationery in an organization?
2.	While managing use of stationery, what points should be kept in mind?

3.	What factors are usually taken into consideration while selecting office stationery in an office?

11.5 ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR A GOOD SYSTEM OF DEALING WITH STATIONERY

As expenditure involved in procuring stationery involves lots of business money, it is important to devise an effective system of dealing with stationery items to ensure its uninterrupted supply in the organization. An effective system of dealing with stationery has the following benefits:

- a) It educates employees in the organization for optimum utilization of stationery items and avoids its wastage. In other words, there is need to encourage responsible usage of all stationery items.
- b) It discourages use of office stationery for personal use. Often memo pads, envelopes, pen, pencil, etc. may be used for personal work by employees.
- c) Lot of space and maintenance charges can be saved through an effective system of dealing stationery.
- d) A good system helps in prevention of deterioration, theft and pilferage of stationery and, thus, avoids wastage of stationery, if any.

A systematic plan regarding the issue of stationery items in an organization involves following steps:

- 1. Firstly, requisition of each type of stationery item stating clearly quantity required, is sent by the department through an indent form or indent book. Indent Book is also called Requisition Book. The requirement is usually counter-signed by department head.
- 2. Store Officer receives the requirement and after analyzing the same passes on instructions to Store Keeper to issue the specified stationery to the department concerned.
- 3. Store Keeper issues the stationery and maintains the record of every issue in Stock Registers or Stock Control Software. This is important to update the balance stock left on a particular date to ensure uninterrupted replenishment of stock.

Store Officer should be careful to maintain required stock levels at regular intervals. Requirement of current year is decided based on the usage of last few years and, accordingly, decisions regarding purchase of stationery are taken.

Office Stationery

An efficient and effective stationery control system is significant to have optimal level of stock of stationery at all times and reducing costs. It helps to reduce unnecessary carrying costs of stationery and keep the business operations go on uninterrupted. Besides, latest stock information of stationery can also be accessed at any point of time.

For an ideal stationery control system, it is significant to review regularly the exact requirement of stationery required by different departments. Maintaining a proper stock level of stationery require consideration of following three important aspects –

- a) Planning of accurate stock of stationery required in a year based on the experience of past few years, as stated above. Thus, unnecessary expenses of holding excess stock levels can be minimized.
- **b)** Regular restoration of stationery supply to a former level to ensure smooth flow of work.
- c) Follow up means regular review of existing stock level of stationery so as to bring desired modifications in the stock for effective and efficient running of office work in the organization.

Specialized Automated Stock Control System helps in managing effective stock control of stationery in real time and generates stock utilization reports. Thus, every modern organization has an effective automated system of managing stationery so that chances of over-stocking and under-stocking are not there and ample quantity of stationery is always available in stores always.

11.6 PURCHASING PRINCIPLES

For cost effective and successful purchasing of stationery, it is important to follow certain essentials of purchasing principles which are discussed as below:

- a) Principle of Right Quantity is important so as to purchase and maintain continuous supply of stationery of right quantity. This is important to avoid any overstocking as this will block not only capital but also deteriorate quality of items. Under-stocking may result in non-availability of required item at the time of need and, thus, hamper flow of work and thus great loss to organizational efficiency.
- **b) Principle of Right Quality** ensures availability of stationery as per the required specifications to carry out office operations qualitatively. It does not mean purchasing expensive or costly items but the right and suitable items.
- c) Principle of Right Time i.e., taking necessary steps to purchase stationery items at the right time so that availability of the items could be ensured at all times. Re-order level for each type of item is to be calculated for timely purchase. Re-order level means stock level at which

a company needs to place an order to refill the stock used.

- **d) Principle of Right Price** means procuring the stationery items at the most competitive price after detailed market survey. For this, Office Manager must invite quotations and decide upon the best bidder.
- e) Principle of Right Source is essential to ensure that the supplier is reliable in all respects and must honor commitments as per the agreed terms and quotations.
- f) Principle of Right Place is one of the essential purchasing principles. According to this principle, vendor should be selected keeping in mind that transportation expenses and material handling costs are reduced to a great extent.

As it is actually impossible to imagine for an office to work without any stationery item and even in a paperless office, office supplies play a very important role to carry out office operations, a Storekeeper needs to have complete knowledge of the following four fundamental rules for better storage of stationery:

Careful Handling: Due to exposure of heat, moisture, etc., there may be deterioration in the quality of stationery items, storing. Hence, and handling them appropriately in proper room and cupboards, drawers, etc. is to be ensured.

Good Housekeeping: Clear and proper signage put on drawers, cupboard, almirah etc. in Store Room facilitates location of items without any delay.

Principle of Requisition and Use: It is very important that Store Keeper should issue stationery items after receipt of proper requisitions only to avoid its misuse. This also helps in saving of time and its optimal usage.

Principle of Effective Stock Control System: As referred, availability of adequate stock of stationery is to be ensured at all times in Store Department. To achieve this objective, proper stock control system has to be devised for smooth flow of work. So, it is necessary to hold review of stocks available regularly so that old and obsolete items are disposed off.

Managing Stationery

Rule of Careful Handling Rule of Good Housekeeping Rule of Requisition and Use Rule of Effective Stock Control System

Figure 11.2: Rules for Better Storage of Stationery

Thus, a careful and systematic planning in handling and storage of office stationery is essential to maintain qualitative and quantitative supply of items at all times. In view of this, the following factors should be borne in mind while arranging stationery items in an office:

- To ascertain why a particular stationery item is required.
- Deciding precise specifications of all stationery items required once detailed market survey completed.
- Determination of quantity which is to be procured based on previous years' consumption.
- After that the most competitive price obtained and order placed on selected vendor. Cost, terms of payment, delivery period, discounts etc. are important parameters to be considered while placing an order.

Check Your Progress B

1.	items in an organization.
2.	Enlist the six purchasing principles of stationery.
	UNIVERSITY
3.	While arranging stationery for an office, what factors should be borne in mind?

11.7 PURCHASE PROCEDURE

Organizations prefer a centralized system for purchase of stationery items for their different departments. With this system, there is saving of money and time as bulk orders are placed and also there is better utilization of storage equipment. On the basis of the budget which has been assigned for purchase of office supplies, an order is placed for purchase of stationery items either

on-line or through an order letter by Purchase Department. While placing orders, there should be complete transparency of purchase procedure. On the website, there are various software available which give guidelines regarding preparation of budgets for purchase of stationery. There are also websites of various vendors who supply stationery and office supplies at competitive rates by on-line ordering.

Effective buying of stationery in an office goes a long way to manage expenses. There is an outlined procedure in every office regarding buying of stationery. Usually, the following methods are used for purchasing stationery in a large organization:

a) Inviting tenders

For bulk buying of stationery, a tender is sent by the organization to invite bids that are received with in a finite period. The purpose of inviting tenders is to obtain the most competitive bid without any bias and do fair work.

The first step in the process of inviting tenders is to identify needs. Once needs identified, detailed specifications of required stationery are prepared and bids invited within a specific deadline by expressing interest in newspapers. In a meeting, the bids received are evaluated and the supplier who wins the tender enters into a contract with the organisation and becomes bound to provide the stationery items at the agreed price and other terms and conditions.

The procedure of inviting tenders is given below:

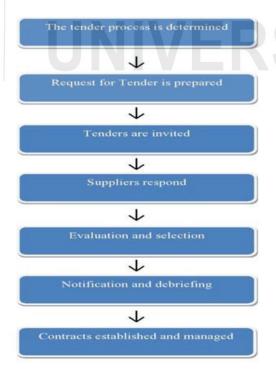


Figure 11.3: The Procedure of Inviting Tenders

E-tendering (electronic tendering) means sharing all information in electronic format. E-tendering has following advantages over tendering manually:

- Accurate and automatic acceptance and rejection of suppliers which fail to meet tender specification.
- Increased efficiency due to fast clarification of inquiries, if any.
- Less cost involved in expressing interest and tendering process as there is digital generation of various documents.
- Fair work and complete transparency in the tendering process

b) Quotations from the Suppliers

The buyer selects various suppliers of stationery after market survey and send them letters of enquiry which contains complete specifications of the requirement, quantity and time frame for supply of desired items. In response to enquiry letter, the suppliers submit quotations with complete terms and conditions of sale. The buyer selects the most competitive quotation and places order for buying the stationery. Before placing orders, it is a normal practice to prepare a comparative statement and the vendor who supplies at the most competitive price is selected for placing the order.

c) Buying Directly from Manufacturers

Many a times, large companies where there is bulk buying of branded stationery every year, the reputed manufacturers are contacted directly and place order placed for supply of the items.

11.8 STANDARDIZATION OF STATIONERY

Standardization of stationery means deciding uniform specifications of quality of office stationery items which are commonly needed by various departments. The standards once established need to be revised time to time according to changing requirements of the work and technology. Standardization of stationery is important due to following reasons:

- It leads to greater economy as we can go for bulk buying at competitive prices due to various trade discounts which are offered by companies.
- Standardization facilitates systematic record of issue and left out inventory due to consistent specifications of stationery.
- Monitoring on wastage of stationery can be done as uniform standards can be devised for its usage.

Initially, different items of different brands should be purchased to determine which brand is more suitable ultimately. Market trends need to be studied by Office Manager on continuous basis to update newly introduced stationery items for continuous revision of specifications of stationery items in the office.

11.9 LET US SUM UP

Stationery means any writing or official material used in day-to-day administrative work. As one of the basic tools, stationery occupies an important role to carry out day to day administrative work in every organization. Every office is using certain essential stationery materials like files, folders, planners, pens, pencils, sharpeners, paper, business card, post-it notes etc. However, the list of essential stationery items may vary according to specific business needs. Managing stationery appropriately is one of the key jobs of an Office Manager. Though it occupies a small amount of an organizational budget but still it is an important area of office management as there is always need to use resources optimally and control expenses. An Office Manager should make a judicious decision and invest only on those stationery items which are absolutely necessary in the organization after a detailed study.

Selection of stationery involves choosing right type of stationery taking into account right quality and right quantity. The two important factors to be kept in mind are the nature of business i.e., type of work which needs to be performed in an organization and its financial position. As expenditure involved in procuring stationery involves lots of business money, it is important to devise an effective system of dealing with stationery to ensure its uninterrupted supply in the organization.

For cost effective and successful purchasing of stationery, it is important to follow certain essentials of purchasing principles - Principle of Right Quantity, Principle of Right Quality, Principle of Right Time, Principle of Right Price, Principle of Right Source and Principle of Right Place.

Organizations prefer a centralized system for purchase of stationery items for their different departments. Methods used for purchasing stationery in a large organization include inviting tenders, inviting quotations or purchasing directly from manufacturers.

Standardization implies fixing the requirements or uniform specifications as to the quality of the items of the office stationery for various purposes. The standards have to be revised from time to time to come up with the changing requirements of the office and technology.

11.10 KEYWORDS

Principle of Right Quality: It ensures availability of stationery as per the required specifications to carry out office operations qualitatively. It does not mean purchasing expensive or costly items but the right and suitable items.

Principle of Right Price: Principle of Right Price means procuring the stationery items at the most competitive price after detailed market survey.

Standardization of Stationery: Standardization of stationery means deciding uniform specifications of quality of office stationery items which are commonly needed by various departments.

11.11 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1. Enlist different stationery items generally used in an office.
- 2. Is it important to manage use of stationery? If so, why?
- 3. Explain the various factors which should be taken into consideration while selecting office stationery in an office.
- 4. "It is essential to follow a system of dealing with stationery items in an organization." Explain the various steps of requisition and issues of stationery.
- 5. Write about the rules regarding storage of stationery.
- 6. Explain various purchasing principles of stationery items.
- 7. What are various methods of purchasing stationery in an organization? Which method do you consider the best for buying bulk stationery for an organization?
- 8. What is meant by standardization of stationery? Why is it important?

Note: These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.



UNIT 12 MAILING PROCEDURES

Structure

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Meaning and Importance of Mail
- 12.3 Centralization of Mail Handling Work
- 12.4 Mail Room Equipment and Accessories
- 12.5 Postal Franking Machine
- 12.6 Mailing through Posts/ Couriers/ Emails
 - 12.6.1 Sending Mail through Posts
 - 12.6.2 Sending Mail through Couriers
 - 12.6.3 Sending Electronic Mails
- 12.7 Appending Files with Emails
- 12.8 Inward and Outward Mails
- 12.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 12.10 Keywords
- 12.11 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 12.12 Terminal Questions

12.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- define the term mail;
- understand different types of mail received in an office;
- describe the importance of mail;
- handle centralization of mail handling work;
- describe the importance of various Mail Room Equipment and accessories;
- explain about use of Postal Franking Machine;
- know the procedure of appending Files with Emails; and
- describe the process of handling of Inward and outward mail.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

It is essential for all business houses to initiate and maintain contacts with their customers, government organizations, financial institutions, investors, employees etc. for their survival and growth. As written communication is the most formal and reliable form of communication, e-mail, letters, memos, circulars, endorsements, reports etc. are written regularly to exchange information among business associates. Sending and receiving written communication takes the form of mail and handling of Mail is one of the important functions of an office. It is important that every Office Manager should have sound knowledge of the procedure of handling of mail which is to be followed in the organization. Efficient and effective handling of mail helps a company to boost its business and have better image of the organization. On the other hand, inefficient and ineffective mailing system may cause delay and loss of business.

During Covid 19 lockdown, digital technology has been a clear winner and it has become almost clear that physical way of dealing with mail is no more sustainable over the long run. With the shift to virtual reality, the companies have been using PCs coupled with internet connectivity to send and receive mails. Even before pre-pandemic, digital platforms were used for sending and receiving messages in an organization but the pandemic has accelerated it to an increasingly new level. Though we cannot do away with sending and receiving physical mails altogether, but its use has reduced considerably because of digital route being the shortest and convenient between a sender and receiver of mail.

12.2 MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF MAIL

Sending and receiving of written communication of various types in an organization is termed as Mail. It is an integral part of administrative work in every office. Each and every mail received in the organization should get due attention and attended to at the earliest opportunity. Efficient and effective handling of office mail is important for sustenance and growth of all business activities. Importance of Mail is imperative due to the following reasons:

- **a)** Facilitates Communication: With the help of mail, we can exchange ideas, opinions, views etc. between two or more parties.
- **b)** Create and Maintain Relationship: Mail is important for keeping in touch with customers, clients and stakeholders in the organization.
- **c) Permanent Record:** With mail, record of communication can be retained which can be used at a later date for any verification purposes, if required.
- **d) Serve as Sequence of Events:** It enables a business to maintain a proper relationship with correspondences made between two parties as they serve as a proper trail of events which helps in strengthening of business.
- **e) Brand Ambassador:** Sales promotion mail acts as a representative of the company to create corporate image.

In large organizations, Mailing Department is set up separately to handle



various mailing operations. However, in small and medium sized organizations, an Office Manager or a Professional Secretary is responsible to take care of handling mail.

12.3 CENTRALIZATION OF MAIL HANDLING WORK

Centralization of Mail Handling work means all the mailing functions are centralized at one place. Mailing Department takes care of handling of all types of mail in the organization i.e., incoming mail, outgoing mail and inter departmental mail. All the departments receive and send mail through Mailing Department. Centralization of Mail Handling has following benefits:

- It leads to specialization as Mail Handling Supervisor becomes expert in all mail handling operations. So, a systematic procedure can be evolved which leads to less chances of errors in the work.
- Functional departments are free from the job of handling of mail.
- Less chances of duplication of mail handling work.
- More efficiency and effectiveness in work due to centralized mail handling.
- Optimum utilization of mail room equipment.
- Centralized mail handling leads to standardization of mail handling procedures.
- However, Centralization of Mail handling also has certain disadvantages which are given below:
- As there is voluminous mail, it may delay in handling of mail, which sometimes results in loss of business.
- Sometimes, there may be confidential mail. In Centralized mail handling, it is difficult to maintain secrecy of information.

In decentralized mail handling work, each department in an organization assumes the responsibility of handling its own mail.

12.4 MAIL ROOM EQUIPMENT AND ACCESSORIES

Various mechanical equipment is used to handle the incoming and outgoing mail efficiently and effectively. Use of various mechanical devices has following advantages:

- Saving of time.
- Greater accuracy in work
- Efficiency in work due to speeding up of various mailing operations
- Elimination of wastage.

- Less chances of misuse of postage stamps
- Reduction in monotony of mailing operations.

The following Mail Room Equipment and Accessories are commonly used in a Mail Room:

1. Letter Opening Machine

It operates manually or electrically at a great speed and can open 100 to 500 letters per minute. Letter Opening Machine has a rotary knife which shaves off a very thin slice of the edge of envelopes. While using the machine, one should be careful that the contents of the envelope are not damaged.



Figure 12.1: Letter Opening Machine

When the mail received is not voluminous, Letter Opener in the form of a knife is used to open incoming mail.



Figure 12.2: Letter Opener Knife

2. Numbering and Dating Machines

A Numbering & Dating Machine is used for stamping on the incoming mail. The next serial numbers and date automatically changes after every use with the help of self-inking stamp pad.



Figure 12.3: Numbering and Dating Machine

3. Folding and Inserting Machine

A Folding Machine is used to fold approx. 5,000 to 10,000 sheets per hour. With this machine, it is possible to fold and insert letters into an envelope. The machine has to be adjusted according to desired number of folds as per the size of envelope.



Figure 12.4: Folding and Inserting Machine

4. Sealing Machine

The work of sealing of mail can be performed very neatly and efficiently with the help of this machine. Sealing Machine facilitates automatically moistening the flaps of an envelope. Hand operated sealing machines can seal about 100 envelopes a minute while electrically operated ones can operate at a speed of 15000 envelopes in an hour.



Figure 12.5: Sealing Machine

5. Mailing Scale

Mailing Scale helps to weigh outgoing mail and ascertain amount of postage stamps which are to be affixed on it.



Figure 12.6: Mailing Scale

6. Addressing Machine

It helps in printing of addresses on envelopes. The machine is used when mail is to be sent to those customers which are regular on mailing list. It can be operated manually or electrically. There is a ribbon to print addresses from already available embossed plates. Once the address plates are ready, it can be used any number of times.



Figure 12.7: Addressing Machine

As physical handling of incoming and outgoing mail is quite time consuming and monotonous job, the mail room equipment discussed above helps an Office Manager to overcome these limitations and handle mailing operations in the most effective and efficient manner.

12.5 POSTAL FRANKING MACHINE

Postal Franking Machine is a machine which is used to weigh and print postage stamps on the mail or parcels to be sent through Post Office. The machine is used only after obtaining license from the Department of Posts. We can add company's logo while designing the print of postage stamps. Sometimes, a customized advertising message in the form of slogan is also

used. Use of Franking Machine is preferred to handle bulk mail as franked mail is quite cheaper than affixing of postage stamps. Usually, franked mail has impressions of postage print which are of bright red colour.

Department of Posts has the facility of Franking Machine which can be managed remotely. It has a bar code with franked print and computerized facility of uploading credit.



Figure 12.8: Postal Franking Machine

Advantages:

- a) The use of Franking Machine saves time as it can help to frank 2000 letters and parcels if done manually and up to 12000 to 15000 if operated electrically.
- b) Record of use of postage stamps not to be maintained separately as every transaction is saved in the machine with complete details.
- c) Chances of pilferage of postal stamps reduced to a large extent.
- d) Neatness in work achieved.
- e) As we can include company's logo or any advertising slogan in the franked mail, it helps to brand the mail and enhances corporate image.
- f) The use of machine helps in avoiding the monotony which may be caused due to affixing of postage stamps in case of voluminous mail.
- g) Due to availability of the remotely managed Franking Machine, the amount can be replenished in the machine without visiting the Post Office personally.
- h) Franked mail is quite cheaper as compared to affixing postage stamps.

Disadvantages:

- a) Chances of errors in amount of printing postage in franked mail.
- b) The franked mail has to be deposited at the counter of Post Office for delivery.
- c) Large initial investment to be made for purchasing the machine.

- d) A good amount of money has to be paid to the post office in advance and recurring expenses to be made for purchase of ink.
- e) Regular maintenance and servicing expenses to be incurred to keep the machine in running condition at all times.

12.6 MAILING THROUGH POSTS/COURIERS/E MAILS

Mail can be delivered physically or with the help of an electronic medium. Post Office, Special Messenger and Courier Companies help physical delivery of mail from one place to another. E mail, an electronic form of sending mail is transmitted with the help of computers, tablets, smart phones or any other electronic device.

COMMUNICATION REVOLUTION

Physical transport of mail through Post Office, Special Messenger, Courier etc.

E Mail

Webinars and Web Conferencing

Today's scenario in every office: Approx. 70% drop of volume of physical transport of mail shift to electronic media.

12.6.1 Sending Mail through Posts

Department of Posts in India mainly provides mail carriage services at affordable rates both at national and international levels. Besides mail carriage, the following services are also rendered by Department of Posts:

- Banking Services viz. Savings Bank Account, Time Deposits, Recurring Deposits, PPF Account, Monthly Income Scheme, Kisan Vikas Patra Scheme etc.
- Insurance Services viz. Postal Life Insurance, Rural Postal Life Insurance etc.
- Remittance Services viz. Money Order, Postal Order etc.
- Miscellaneous Postal Services like sale of postal and revenue stamps, pension and bill payments etc.

Though due to paperless office scenario, mails are normally sent digitally but still all types of organizations send often letters, parcels etc. with the help of a Post Office. Various IT enabled services are provided to the public by

Department of Posts, which are specialized in nature, fast and ensure documented delivery of mail. Some of the commonly used services offered regarding carriage of mail are discussed as follows:

Speed Post

It is an express time bound service for delivery of mail and other important stuff. With the help of Track and Trace facility for speed post, there is consistency and reliability in mail delivery and the compensation is paid for delay in delivery or loss of articles. For bulk delivery of mail by speed post, personalized and customized services viz. credit facilities, home collection, opening of speed post account, volume discounts etc. are provided by Department of Posts.



BNPL: It means 'Book Now Pay Later'. Department of Posts provides the facility of credit to customers who send bulk mail i.e., the mail being sent by speed post should not be less than Rs. 10,000/- in a month.

Certificate of Posting

The purpose of a Certificate of Posting is to provide a proof that letters and documents have actually been accepted for posting. This Certificate is date stamped and signed at the window of Post Office while handing over the letters and documents for delivery. However, it does not guarantee that items have reached its destination and addressee has actually received the posted items. In case of delay or loss of mailed stuff, sender cannot claim for any compensation.

Business Reply Post

In case an organization desires to receive a reply, without putting the burden of paying the charges of postage on its customers and clients, may append a self-addressed reply card which can be posted, without affixing any postage stamps. A pre-printed business reply postcard or envelope is appended while sending the mail. Special bar code is also used for routing. The basic purpose of Business Reply Post is to obtain response from prospective clients and customers.

To avail the service, an application in the specified performa to be submitted to Post Office and required license fee to be paid in advance.



Figure 12.10: Business Reply Post

Value Payable Post Parcel

This system facilitates the persons who do not wish to pay in advance for articles ordered. Against bonafide orders, parcel can be received by addressee only on payment of specified amount when delivered. The amount realized is then sent to the concerned trader. Thus, Post Office acts as an agency between the traders and the customers.

Post Box

Post Office provides the facility of Post Box which has a unique number. In other words, every post box or locker is allotted a number which is kept in Post Office. Whenever any mail is received bearing the allotted Post Box Number., it is kept in the relevant post box and locked.

The mail is collected on regular intervals by the authorized persons of renter on production of Delivery Ticket which is supplied by the Post Office. The renter can collect the mail from the Post Box during the business hours. Anyone can avail the facility by paying the specified rent to receive fully paid mail.

Post Bag

Under this system, a bag which has two duplicate keys is supplied by the renter to the Post Office. One key is available with the Post Office and the other with the renter. All mail is kept in the bag by the Post Office and locked. In other words, all postal articles which are addressed to the renter's office are kept by the Post Office in the Post bag. The locked post bag which contains the mail is handed over to the renter on production of Delivery Ticket which is supplied by the post authorities.

Blind Literature Packets

Department of Posts has given the facility to transmit the packets for the use of the blind only free of cost up to 7 kilograms.

Direct Post

Whenever there is need to advertise product and services by the commercial houses, direct mail which is accepted in bulk in designated offices is delivered to the prospective customers. This type of cost-effective mail is not posted in a letter box and should be presented at the window of the post office.

International Registered Post

It is one of the safest and cheapest mailing system for international post from India.

Logistics Post

It is very useful business service for sending parcels and large consignments across the nation and around the world. There is facility of collection to distribution of mail as per client's request. It also provides complete solution from order preparation to order fulfillment of client.

Express Mail Service (EMS) through Universal Postal Union

EMS is used to send documents and merchandise across the globe with the help of postal network. The service is provided by members of Universal Postal Union. The facility of online tracking of documents and merchandise being sent also available through EMS.

Like kiosks in banks, we will soon have kiosks in Post Offices to provide us various services, products and information about Department of Posts.

12.6.2 Sending Mail through Couriers

Courier post is customized door-to-door individualized delivery service. Mail is collected by a representative of Courier Company from the sender's office for personalized transmission at the destination. Courier posts are being increasingly used for transmission of mail and parcels at local, national or international level.

Due to features viz. high speed, security, tracking, acknowledgement and committed delivery schedules, courier services have witnessed a phenomenal growth in modern era to deliver mail and parcels. Courier services have become a very important means of delivering mail and parcels in a commercial organization due to following basic features:

- a) Delivery of any type of article of any value or weight i.e., perishable commodities, medicines etc.
- b) ETA (Expected Time of Arrival) and online tracking facilities are available (Normally stringent time schedules followed as per ETA).



- c) On request, proof of delivery can be obtained.
- d) Certainty of delivery of consignment as there is safe and reliable delivery.
- e) We can avail the facility of transit insurance, if desired.
- f) Logistic facilities offered by various companies like warehouse, special packing etc. as per client's needs.

The world's largest courier companies include DTDC, Bluedart, FedEx, DHL etc

12.6.3 Sending Electronic Mails

E-mail (also called web mail) is the most popular and powerful means to transmit written messages through electronic media. E-mail as written means of communication, is preferred over other means as it has following important characteristics:

- Transmission of pictures, videos, demonstrations etc.
- Immediate delivery of mail with the click of a key.
- Possible to send and receive mail any time during the day.
- Automated record management of received and sent mails.
- Security of mail.
- Facility to send bulk mail.
- Economy in sending mail.
- Facility to send CC (Carbon Copy), BCC (Blind Carbon Copy), forward, etc.
- Supports green technology as paperless in nature.

Sometimes, there may be following threats which are associated with sending and receiving of E Mail:

- Crowed in box due to unwanted mails which may cause overloading of information
- Threat of virus attack
- Hacking of e mail

However, with the various techniques, it is possible to overcome the e mail hazards. It is important that in-box of mail should be checked-in regularly.

Management of E Mail

It may be noted that now-a-days, there are various software/tools available in the market to manage e mail efficiently and effectively. They offer various E mail management strategies which may be used as per our specific requirement to achieve organizational goals. The basic objective of using these strategies is to keep our mail inbox quite organized at all times so that

we do not miss any important business mail. Some of the e mail management strategies which may be used are mentioned below:

- Creating folders for emails which are of similar types.
- Setting of automatic filters (by the name of product, client, project, location etc.) for important mails in inbox.
- Preparing template responses for certain e mails.
- Sorting mail in a designated folder whenever received.
- Flagging of emails which need to be responded urgently.
- Possibility to snooze any email or to allow any email to come back intermittently at the top of inbox
- Setting of signatures i.e., name, designation, department, address of organization, mobile number etc.

E Mail Etiquette

Depending on the position of receiver (i.e., superior, subordinate, colleague, customer or any other person), we need to take care of certain etiquette while communicating through an email.

The following etiquette are to be necessarily followed while sending an official email:

- Always write clear and concise subject.
- Address with an appropriate salutation.
- State clearly the idea behind sending the email (in body of the email). Each word should be chosen wisely as recipient is interested more in this part.
- Language of email should be polite.
- Use only standard abbreviations.
- In case of any attachment to be sent, do not forget to include the same.
- At the end, do write polite closing sentence along with name, designation and contact number of sender.
- Include carefully CC (Carbon Copy) and BCC (Blind Carbon Copy) while addressing email.

It is very important that all e mails received are checked regularly at intervals during the day and replied at the earliest opportunity.

Check Your Progress A

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1.	тш ир	uie	10110	UWIIIE	Ula	IIIKS	willi	Sultable	worus.

a)		of mail	l handling	work	means	all	the	mailing
	functions are centra	lized at	one place.					

b)	Mail Room Equipment monotony of mailing operations.
c)	A Numbering & Dating Machine is used for
d)	is a machine which is used to weigh and print postage stamps on the mail or parcels to be sent through Post Office.
e)	Mail can be delivered physically or with the help of a/an medium.
f)	is very high-speed express service for letters and documents with time-bound delivery.
g)	The basic purpose of Business Reply Post is to obtain
h)	BNPL means
i)	means facility of collection to distribution of mail as per client's request.

- State whether each of the following statements are True or False.
 - a) Each and every mail received in the organization should get due attention and should be attended to at the earliest opportunity.
 - b) Besides carriage of mail, various banking services are also rendered by Department of Posts.
 - c) Certificate of Posting guarantee that items have reached its destination and addressee has actually received the posted items.
 - d) Department of Post has given the facility to transmit the packets for the use of the blind only free of cost upto 7 kilograms.
 - Due to features viz. high speed, security, tracking, acknowledgement and committed delivery schedules, courier services have witnessed a phenomenal growth in modern era to deliver mail and parcels.
 - It is not necessary to take care of certain etiquettes while communicating through an email.

APPENDING FILES WITH E MAILS 12.7

Append means to add at the end. It is a common practice to attach already created files in computer while sending e mails. The series of steps required to be taken while appending a file are:

- Compose your mail.
- Write subject and, then, message in the body of e mail.
- Click the email attachment icon, for example "Attach," "Attach Files" or "Attach a File,"
- Open a file browser window from where we have to select our files which need to be appended.

- Navigate to the file location which is to be appended from the available files.
- Click the required file.
- Put the email address of the person you want to send the attachment to in the To: field.
- Hit the 'Send' button.

Many a times, when a file is open, the program being used to open the file may write "protect the file" or mark it "as in use". If a file is protected, we get an error when attempting to append that file. To append a protected file, the program protecting the file must be closed first.

12.8 INWARD AND OUTWARD MAILS

In an office, Mail Supervisor or an Office Executive usually is responsible for mail handling work. In order to handle all incoming and outgoing mails efficiently and effectively, a well-organized strategy has to be devised so that office processes are carried out without any delay. While planning mail handling operations, all efforts have to be made to ascertain that -

- a) there is no careless at any stage of mail handing as every mail, whether incoming or outgoing, is important from business point of view.
- b) all mail room equipment and accessories are used optimally.
- c) agency for receiving incoming mail and sending outgoing mail is selected judiciously to avoid any last-minute hassles.
- d) all mail generated and received in the organization is properly recorded to trace any mail at a later date without any delay.

TYPES OF MAIL

In an organization, mail can be broadly of two types:

- (a) On the basis of Means of Transmission, mail may be of following two types:
- Paper (Physical) Mail: Paper Mail is the mail which is received or sent with the help of an agency. Agency of receiving or sending mail may be Post Office, Courier, Messenger etc.
- **Electronic Mail:** Electronic Mail, as discussed above, is received sent through digital means with the help of internet.

Hybrid Mail Technology

This can convert all inward/outward paper (physical) mail into digital mode and deliver the same to the receiver electronically. Hence, the receiver gets an email along with a link which contains the digital image of the paper mail being transmitted.

- **(b) On the basis of Generation /Receipt of Mail,** mail may be of following type:
- Inward (Incoming) Mail Written communication received by an organization in the form of letters, notices, circulars, inquiries etc. is inward mail.
- Outward (Outgoing) Mail Any communication in written form sent outside an organization is termed as Outward Mail. It may also take the form of letters, notices, circulars, inquiries etc.
- Inter-Departmental Mail Inter-Departmental Mail means exchange of written communication between employees of different departments in an organization i.e. written communication between an Accounts Manager and a Sales Manager.
- Intra-Departmental Mail Exchange of written communication within the same department in an organization. e.g., the communication between Purchase Manager and a member of purchase team.

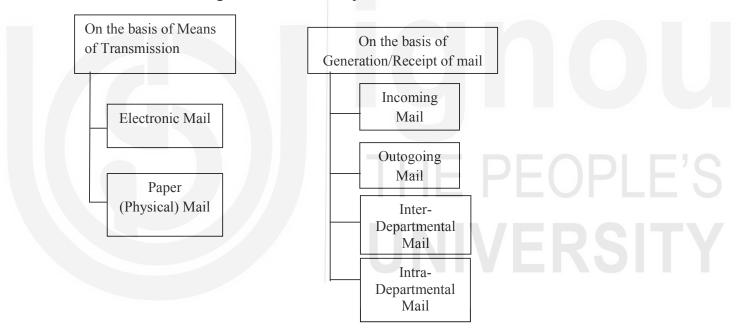


Figure 12.11: Classification of Mails

E Mails are generally addressed to the official concerned directly. However, in case, there is need to delegate tasks, the same is forwarded to the person concerned for necessary action. However, in case of paper mail, there is defined elaborate process involved in every organization for speedy disposal of mail. Various steps of handling inward and outward paper mail are discussed below.

Steps to Handle Inward Mail

Paper mail handling process varies from organization to organization and depends mainly on its size, nature and type of business being dealt with. The following steps are commonly followed if the mail is received physically:

1. Mail is Received

Mail is received in the office by an Office Assistant or Mailing Clerk. Sometimes, Front Office Assistant also receives all incoming mail and provides acknowledgement wherever required.

2. Received Mail is Sorted

Received mail is sorted so as to ensure that:

- a) if any personal or confidential mail is received, it could be sent to the concerned person unopened.
- b) official mail of urgent nature i.e. Court summons, time bound orders or any other important mail accords priority while opening and delivering.
- c) mail of routine nature viz. product literature, sales promotion letters, catalogue, etc. are given the last priority while opening.

There are pigeon hole racks, trays etc. with clearly marked names of department or numbers to facilitate sorting of mail.



Figure 12.12: Sorting of Mail

3. Opening of Official Mail

The next step is to open the official mail. In case of small organizations, as the mail received is limited, a paper knife is used for opening envelopes. Letter Opening Machine is used for opening bulk mail efficiently and neatly. While opening mail, it is important to ensure that:

- a) all the enclosures are appended with the covering letter.
- b) there is nothing left in the envelope before the same is disposed off.

4. Examining of Mail

The next step after opening the mail is examining of mail. Mail Handling Assistant examines briefly and quickly the contents of every letter/document to ensure that all enclosures mentioned in the letters are available.

5. Recording of Incoming Mail

After examining the contents, recording of incoming mail is done in Diary Register or Dak Register. The purpose of the register is to record briefly all the incoming mail of the organization and trace any mail, if required, at a later date. However, sales letters, product literature or any other advertising material is not recorded.

Incoming Mail Register

S.No./ (Diary No.)	Date and Time of Receiving	Reference No. or Letter No.	Sender's Name and Address	Subject	Concerned Deptt./Name of Official to whom the mail is being sent	Receiver's Initials

The above Register is normally maintained in Govt. deptts. and private offices have done away with the maintenance of the register as the same is quite time consuming.

6. Date Stamping of Mail

After recording of incoming mail, date stamping is done on every mail with the help of Automatic Numbering & Dating Machine. Generally, the following details are available on this type of stamp-

M/s Falcon New Technology, New Delhi	
Date of Receiving	. R
Time of Receiving	
Diary No	
Signature of Receiver	

7. Mail is Segregated and Distributed

Once the date stamping is done, mail is properly segregated and distributed to the concerned departments or officials.

8. Follow-up Action

The last and the most important step is "Follow-up Action" on the mail received. So, all the efforts are to be made to take quick and necessary action as per the requirements. Any delay in sending replies means loss of business prospects and bad corporate image.

Steps to Handle Outward Mail

Once the paper mail is distributed to the concerned departments, the following process is usually followed in an office:

1. Preparation of Suitable Replies

Once the suitable replies to letters are prepared and signed by an authorized signatory, the outgoing mail is kept in 'Out Tray' in every department. Thus, the tray contains the mail which is ready for dispatch.

2. Collection of Outgoing Letters

A Multi-tasking Assistant or Office Assistant collects all the outgoing letters twice a day from the 'Out Tray'. It is the responsibility of Mailing Supervisor or Office Manager to get the mail collected from the departments timely so that it could be dispatched without any hindrance.

In case of any special instructions regarding dispatch of mail, Mailing Department or Dispatch Section deliver the same according to the instructions mentioned on the mail.

3. Recording in Mail Outward Register

Every mail to be sent is recorded in Mail Outward Register, also called Despatch Register. Details of the register are mentioned below:

Dispatch Register/Outward Mail Register

S.No./ Despatch No.	Date of dispatch	Reference No. of letter being sent	Name and brief Address of Receiver	Brief Subject	Mode of Delivery	Postage Stamps used Rs. P.	Remarks

Peon Book is used to record local Mail which is to be sent by a Special Messenger. It has following details:

Format of Peon Book

S.No.	Ref. No. & Date	Name & Address of Receiver	Brief Subject	Name and Designation of Messenger	Receiver's Signature along with date and time of receipt of Mail

4. Folding and Insertion of Mail

Once the recording of outward mail done, letters are properly folded according to the size of envelope and inserted in the envelopes. Folding and Inserting Machines are available to do this task efficiently in case bulk outward mail is to be handled every day.

5. Preparation of Envelopes – Addressing, Sealing and Stamping

The next step after folding of the letters is to put them into envelopes and

then write address on them. Careful and neat addressing with proper margins on envelope ensures secured delivery of paper mail. While addressing on envelopes, proper margin needs to be left at the top right corner for affixing or printing of postage stamps. Addressing Machine helps in addressing of bulk mail as the same ensures saving of time and printing correct addresses.

It is important to use always PIN Code (Postal Index Number Code) while addressing envelopes as the code helps in accurate and speedy delivery of mail being sent.

Once addressing of envelopes completed, we need to do sealing of envelopes. Envelopes which contain important and confidential documents are to be sealed very carefully. Book Post content like catalogue, advertising material, product literature etc. are usually not sealed while sending.

On the outward mail sent through post, postage stamps of suitable denominations need to be affixed or printed with the help of Franking Machine. For this, Weighing Scale is used and the correct amount of postage stamps calculated according to opted mode of delivery. Over-stamping and under-stamping are to be avoided at all costs.

Franking Machines are commonly used by offices for stamping the outgoing bulk mail.

6. Sending Mail for Delivery

Posting of Mail is the last step in the procedure of handling of outgoing paper mail. Mail which is to be sent by Speed Post is sent through Mail Assistant to the Post Office so to obtain proof of delivery. Peon Book is used to obtain acknowledgement of mail which is to be sent through special messenger. Mail to be sent through courier handed over to courier company's representatives as per the fixed time intervals.

Differentiate between Inter-Departmental and Intra-Departmental Mail

Check Your Progress B

2.	Enlist the various steps of handling of paper incoming mail.



3.	Mention the various entries of a Dispatch Register?
4.	What do you understand by Hybrid Mail Technology?

12.9 LET US SUM UP

Handling of Mail is one of the important functions of an office. It is important that every Office Manager should have sound knowledge of the procedure of handling of mail which is to be followed in the organization. Efficient and effective handling of mail helps a company to boost its business and have better image of the organization. In large organizations, Mailing Department is set up to handle various mailing operations. However, in small organizations, an Office Manager or a Professional Secretary is responsible to take care of handling mail. Centralization of Mail Handling work means all the mailing functions are centralized at one place. Mailing Department takes care of handling of all types of mail in the organization i.e. incoming mail, outgoing mail and inter departmental mail. mechanical equipment viz. Letter Opening Machine, Numbering and Dating Machines, Folding and Inserting Machine, Folding and Inserting Machine, Franking Machine etc. is used to handle the incoming and outgoing mail efficiently and effectively. Mail can be delivery physically or with the help of an electronic medium. Post Office, Special Messenger and Courier Companies help physical delivery of mail from one place to another. E mail, an electronic form of sending mail is sent with the help of computers, tablets, smart phones or any other electronic device.

Department of Posts in India mainly provides mail carriage services at affordable rates both at national and international levels. Courier post is customized door-to-door individualized delivery service. Mail is collected by a representative of Courier Company from the sender's office for personalized transmission at the destination. E-mail (also called web mail) is the most popular and powerful means to transmit written messages through electronic media. It is common practice to attach already created files in computer while sending e mails.

In an organization, mail can be broadly of two types. Firstly, on the basis of means of transmission i.e., Paper (Physical) Mail or Electronic Mail. Paper



Mail is the mail which is received or sent with the help of an agency. Agency of receiving or sending mail may be Post Office, Courier, Messenger etc. Electronic Mail, as discussed above, is sent with through digital means with the help of internet. Secondly, on the basis of generation/receipt of mail i.e. Inward (Incoming) Mail. Outward (Outgoing) Mail, Inter-Departmental Mail and Intra-Departmental Mail. E Mails are generally addressed to the official concerned directly. However, in case, there is need to delegate tasks, the same is forwarded to the person concerned for necessary action. However, in case of paper mail, there is defined elaborate process involved in every organization for speedy disposal of mail. Paper mail handling process varies from organization to organization and depends mainly on its size, nature and type of business being dealt with.

12.10 KEYWORDS

Centralization of Mail: Centralization of Mail Handling work means all the mailing functions are centralized at one place.

Inward (Incoming) Mail: It is a written communication received by an organization in the form of letters, notices, circulars, inquiries etc. is inward mail.

Postal Franking Machine: It is a machine which is used to weigh and print postage stamps on the mail or parcels to be sent through Post Office.

12.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress A

- 1. a) Centralization
 - b) reduces
 - c) for stamping on the incoming mail.
 - d) Franking Machine
 - e) electronic
 - f) Speed Post
 - g) is to obtain response from prospective clients and customers.
 - h) Book Now Pay Later
 - i) Logistics Post
- 2. a) True
 - b) True
 - c) False
 - d) True
 - e) True
 - f) False

12.12 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1. Explain briefly the importance of mail for a business organization.
- 2. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of Centralization of Mailing Services.
- 3. Why should we use Mail Room Equipment?
- 4. "Use of Franking Machine is preferred to stamp bulk mail". In the light of the statement, mention the various advantages of using a Franking Machine.
- 5. Enumerate the various services rendered by Department of Posts.
- 6. Explain e mail management strategies which may be used for efficient management of mail.
- 7. Enlist the various steps required to be taken to append a file while sending an e mail.
- 8. "Tarun has to follow a series of steps to handle incoming paper mail."

 Describe each step of handling incoming mail which is usually followed by him.

Note: These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.



BLOCK 5 MODERN OFFICE EQUIPMENTS AND SYSTEMS

BLOCK 5 MODERN OFFICE EQUIPMENTS AND SYSTEMS

This is the fifth block of the course "Office Management and Secretarial Practices". This block will familiarize you with fundamentals and preliminary aspects related to modern office equipment and systems. The block on the theme "Modern Office Equipment and Systems" comprises of three units, the detail of which is mentioned below:

Unit 13: Discusses the meaning and importance of office automation and the concept of Modern office equipment. It also makes the readers familiar with the various kinds of office machines and their use. It also discusses the office Mechanization and various advantages & disadvantages of Mechanization in offices and the factors in Selecting Office Machines.

Unit 14: Provides an overview on the modern office system. It makes the learners familiar with the technological communication, meaning of web conferencing, office system and automation. It also talks about technology internet and cloud used in office including smart cloud based office solutions, benefits and drawbacks of cloud computing, cloud storage, role of cloud computing, impact of IoT in cloud and different types of cloud computing and their benefits.

Unit 15: Provides an overview on banking facilities and modes of payment. It discusses the various types of account, passbook and cheque book. It also discusses different types of banking forms and different types of online banking. The later part of the unit discusses the various types of payment methods including Cheque, Indian Postal Order and Online Payments.

UNIT 13 MODERN OFFICE EQUIPMENTS

Structure

- 13.0 Objectives
- 13.1 Introduction
- 13.2 Office Equipment
- 13.3 Modern Office equipment
- 13.4 Office Automation
- 13.5 Office Mechanization
 - 13.5.1 Advantages of office Mechanization
 - 13.5.2 Disadvantages of Mechanization Office
- 13.6 Kinds of Office Machines
- 13.7 Factors in Selecting Office Machines
- 13.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 13.9 Keywords
- 13.10 Terminal Questions

13.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the meaning and importance of office automation;
- understand the concept of Modern office equipment;
- understand the office Mechanization and various advantages & disadvantages of Mechanization in offices;
- explain the various kinds of office machines and their use; and
- discuss the factors in Selecting Office Machines.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

The difference between modern offices and traditional office spaces is a debatable topic. Modern office designs tend to have open-plan layouts and contemporary interiors whereas traditional offices are usually closed-plan and feature old-fashioned decor.

The people and culture of the company, as well as the aesthetics, frequently define a modern office. In terms of office space, a modern office is likely to include light/white decor, vast areas, and minimum furniture, resulting in a modernistic approach. Office equipment refers to furniture and devices that aid in the effective production of office services, communication, and records.

Modern Office Equipments and Systems Customers may boost employee productivity and happiness, as well as generate more seamless communication and collaboration across locations and platforms, with contemporary workplace solutions, while ensuring the security and integrity of systems and data.

13.2 OFFICE EQUIPMENT

The tools, machinery, and furnishings required to complete the tasks in an office are referred to as office equipment.

Every business requirement is to reflect about the types of apparatus, their business needs in order for their employees to do their job appropriately. Office equipment helps in managing office-related work and makes your day to day tasks run smoothly. Office equipment is more often than not unnoticed, but essential. The correct and essential equipment should be obtainable for every member of staff so they can work effectively and proficiently. Not only will employees get good quality equipment, but it will also benefit the business image. The right office supplies send out a positive message to clients and partners. Choosing the right office equipment depends on your business requirements and employees needs.

The importance of Office equipment can be understood by the following points:

- 1. They help to improve the quantity of work.
- 2. They increase the pace or quality of work.
- 3. They are more precise.
- 4. They save time and money.
- 5. They enhance the consistency and look of printed items.

13.3 MODERN OFFICE EQUIPMENT

Technology aids in the organization of the business. The employment of modern office equipment is foreseen for offices in this modern era- before the entrance of typewriters in the 15th century, the publication of business papers was a complex activity that was largely handled by secretaries because everything had to be handwritten. As time and technology progressed, corporate organizations experienced information overload as a result of increased commercial transactions. As a result, technology is required by business in order to produce words successfully, professionally, and indefinitely. To meet escalating employee expectations, a contemporary workplace civilisation welcomes technology, cares less about where and when individuals complete their careers, and instead fosters a culture based on mutual respect, trust, and accountability.

Workers spend less time on regular activities while using modern office technology, which frees them up for other tasks. Computer aware employees examine computer automation strategies in order to save time spent on regular, repetitive jobs. Employees, for example, save time formatting documents by using templates. Sharing a template with other workers via remote server access, cloud storage, and email from everywhere there is cellular connectivity may enormously boost competency. Google Drive and iCloud are useful services for organizing and sharing frequently used templates, shared spreadsheets, and work-related paperwork. The use of organized cloud sharing eliminates the necessity for a data-sharing gobetween.

Examples of Modern Office Equipments include the following:

- Ergonomic furniture
- Multifunctional spaces
- Integrated technology
- Collaborative environments
- Open spaces
- Recreation and rest areas
- Lighting
- Decorative motivation

The Advantages of Modern Office Design are as follows:

1. Boosts Productivity: A modern office is distinct from a conventional environment. It's not merely a four-wall office with a door. It allows to work both in the workplace and at home. The ability to work and interact freely with others might really increase productivity and help the network.

Companies usually strive for a high degree of productivity since it indicates that the company output is worth the investment. Of all, a company's efficiency is primarily based on its personnel, which implies that employees should feel adequately supported at work.

The first step in building an exciting workplace atmosphere is to provide them with a practical, pleasant, and safe environment. Regardless of the sort of business one operate, one may set up offices, workshops, and meeting spaces to foster creativity and productivity.

- 2. A Healthier Workforce: When creating a new office or workspace, the health of the employees should be a top priority. If the employees spend the most of their day at a desk, changing their workstation may make a significant impact on their physical and emotional well-being. Perhaps giving standing workstations and providing innovative seating options may limit the amount of people injured on the job.
- **3.** Creates a Functional Environment: The sort of business the firm runs will play an important part in the design process while designing a



Modern Office Equipments and Systems functioning workplace. How many staff will occupy the space? Do the company welcome clients into the office on a regular basis? Will the general public be able to enter the premises? What kind of machinery or equipment is required? All of these concerns should be addressed before signing off on any designs. Knowing the workspace's requirements is critical to providing a functioning and successful setting in which the employees can work.

- **4. Select Reliable Materials:** Choosing materials, decor, and office furniture may be a challenging task. While wanting to choose a suitable color scheme or branded decor, the materials' dependability, safety, and durability are all critical.
- 5. Eliminates the stress factor: While it is rare to totally remove jobrelated stress, an open workplace has a really innovative solution. Many organizations have devised novel techniques to assist, encourage and alleviate the strain on their staff. Planned events, movie evenings, parties, and so on are just a few of the features of a contemporary office. A modern office bends all the norms to suit perfectly with the times, allowing them to build an atmosphere that thrives.

There are various benefits of upgrading the Outdated office equipment. Same can be explained as follows:

- 1. Superior Output Capability: Modern office equipment is constantly changing and improving in its capacity to produce high-quality documents and images. If the company is suffering with its present equipment, it may be time to consider investing in a machine that can handle the job. Newer equipment produces more output and has a higher capacity for production, making the workplace more productive.
- 2. Energy Saving Capability: Modern office equipment has the capacity to save energy by entering a power saving mode when not in use. This may not appear to be a lot of energy being consumed, but it will mount up over time. The same logic that applies to leaving a light on in an empty room applies here. When not in use, the machine will go to sleep, conserving energy in the short and long term.
- 3. Employees will find it easier to use: One of the best aspects of contemporary office technology is how simple it is to operate for the average individual. Of course, someone who has been trained in a given equipment will know exactly what each button does and what the machine is capable of, but the majority of the personnel will not have this knowledge. Choose a contemporary machine with the capacity to perform intuitively. This will increase workplace productivity since the staff will be able to use machines more quickly and easily.

Check Your Progress A

1.	What is office equipment?
2.	List a few examples of modern office equipment.
3.	Does modern office design eliminate the stress factor? If yes, then how?
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4.	How does modern office design boost productivity?

13.4 OFFICE AUTOMATION

Before 1947, when Ford formed an automation department, the term automation, which was influenced by the previous word automatic (derived from automaton), was not frequently used. During this period, the industry was quickly adopting feedback controllers, which had been established in the 1930s. Automation refers to a broad variety of technologies that eliminate the need for human intervention in operations. Predetermining decision criteria, subprocess linkages, and associated actions — and embodying those predeterminations in computers – reduces human intervention. Automation is a term used to describe technological applications in which human

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involvement is minimal. This covers business process automation (BPA), IT automation, personal applications such as home automation, and other similar technologies.

People are unaware of the extent of present automation and the amount of innovation that has already been incorporated in our everyday lives, allowing us to function more effectively and freely. Examples of Automation include data cleaning scripts, self-driving vehicles, hospitality event processing, IVR, and smart home notifications. The various computer hardware and software used to digitally produce, gather, store, alter, and convey office information required to do fundamental activities is referred to as office automation. In general, an office automation system performs three core functions: information storage, data interchange, and data management. Hardware and software work together to provide essential operations in each wide application area.

Office automation (OA) refers to the collection of hardware, software, and processes that support the automation of an organization's information processing and communication tasks. It entails using computers and software to digitize, store, process, and transmit the majority of ordinary office operations and procedures.

Office Automation Applications

Data applications, which are used to generate or update a document, file, spreadsheet, or picture, are part of office automation systems. There are several word processing and desktop presentation tools available that allow one to create or edit textual data.

Example of office automation

Microsoft Office 365

Microsoft Office 365 suite is an example of office automation. By centralizing all documentation and resources, the software saves time and money. The MSO-365 suite is a hosted, online version of Microsoft Office software, similar to the classic installation version.



Source: Microsoft

Figure 13.1 Microsoft Office 365

This subscription-based online service comprises Office, Exchange Online, SharePoint Online, Lync Online, and Microsoft Office Web Apps.

• Google Workspace

Google Workspace is a bundle of cloud services, productivity, and collaboration tools, as well as software and solutions created and marketed by Google. It started in 2006 as Google Apps for Your Domain, was relaunched as G Suite in 2016, and will be redesigned again in 2020 as Google Workspace.



Figure 13.2: Google Workspace

Google Workspace is a collection of communication and collaboration applications designed for business users. The basic Google Workspace communication programmes, including Gmail and Google Meet, as well as the collaboration apps, such as Google Docs, Sheets, Slides, and Forms, are extensively used throughout the world.

13.5 OFFICE MECHANIZATION

Technology aids in the organization of the firm. Project Management Software, for example, aids in the creation, delegation, review, and evaluation of tasks. Employers and supervisors can readily monitor workplace activity, which aids in keeping things on track. Mechanization is the process of transitioning from performing labor mostly or solely by hand or with animals to doing it with equipment. Machines and equipment have become an integral aspect of the contemporary office. A huge range of appliances and machinery are utilized to ensure that office tasks are completed quickly, accurately, and efficiently.

Office mechanization is an effort to replace human labor with machine operation in order to perform regular duties more efficiently and effectively.

13.5.1 Advantages of Office Mechanization

As Internet access coverage and performance increase, the premise of the office itself becomes less significant. The modern office environment is more concerned with what you can do rather than where you do it. New technology

Modern Office Equipments and Systems is altering the view of what constitutes an office. Offices will certainly embrace newer technology that allow them to accomplish more work with fewer employees, and there will be pressure to maintain a current, professional image by remaining up to date on the newest tech developments. Mechanization has become an essential component of the modern office administrative process. It has several advantages, the most important of which are as follows:

- 1. It Reduces Monotony: A work that is repetitive in nature causes boredom and a sense of monotony among employees. As a result, if the same job is repeated in the machine, the worker will not feel the pinch, and therefore a machine minimizes boredom and monotony.
- **2. Maintains standardization:** It improves the grade of work in terms of quality output. As a result, there is a greater sense of teamwork and better coordination among the staff.
- **3. Accuracy:** Machines offer greater precision. Errors are reduced to a minimum. As a result, the job proceeds smoothly and delays and bottlenecks are avoided, which might be costly.
- **4. Greater Control:** Using a correct collection of machines allows for better job control since it enables subordinates to utilize them and perform the work not only within the specified time but also within the economy—with precision and accuracy.
- 5. Increased Efficiency: Machines improve the speed and efficiency of all forms of office activity. With their assistance, work that may take hours to do could be completed in motion. Improved efficiency leads to increased profitability while also creating a positive image in the minds of those who interact with the organization.
- **6.** Lower Operating Costs: The usage of machinery reduces the operational cost per hour of work. Of course, there is no doubt that they need a significant initial capital expenditure. However, in the long run, they are advantageous.
- 7. Improved Work Quality: Mechanization and machine aid to improve the quality of work done in the office. Not only will the job be finer, but it will also be more systematic.
- **8. More Convenient:** Digital files take up far less amount of space than hard copies and are far easier to organize. Furthermore, archived digital files are far more accessible than archived paper files. Digital files may easily be shared among several people at the same time and accessible from remote places, increasing job productivity.
- **9. Environmental Friendly**: Less paper is utilized for duplicate copies and general record keeping when there are fewer paper files. In most cases, this element makes a paperless office more ecologically responsible. For

online magazines and other publications, publishing digitally means eliminating the use of inks that contain heavy metals, solvents, and other environmentally hazardous compounds.

13.5.2 Disadvantages of Office Mechanization

Although the use of mechanical devices has several advantages, it also has a number of disadvantages:

- 1. Surplus of Staff: It has been discovered that some machines require a skilled hand to operate. If it is not accessible for an extended period of time, then either someone is trained to operate it or instant recruiting is conducted to find a person to run the machine. In both circumstances, there is a cost involved, and it adds to the expenditure while also increasing the strength of the staff.
- **2. High installation costs:** Most office devices, such as the Xerox machine, Electronic Scanning Machine, and computers, are expensive, and a significant amount is spent not only to purchase them, but also to maintain them. As a result, the installation and maintenance fees are rather hefty.
- **3. Operating Costs:** The operating expenses of some equipment might be rather significant at times. Before purchasing a Xerox machine, for example, find out how many pages a bottle of toner can copy. Similarly, determine whether the copier's selenium drum requires servicing in an air-conditioned area.
- **4. Breakdown costs:** Breakdowns, etc., can be quite expensive at times. Repairing the same will cost a significant amount of money. Furthermore, the work is halted throughout the break-down period. This raises the expense of the office's operating system.
- 5. Under Utilization of Machines: A machine acquired at a high cost that is not utilized to its full potential, or is not used regularly, not only blocks the money that was spent to buy it, but it also decreases the bank's interest on the money that was blocked while acquiring it. As a result, it is critical to fully use the potential of machines.
- 6. Concerns Regarding Software and Hardware: A paperless office is only as productive as the software and hardware being used to maintain records allow its employees to be. Software glitches and equipment outages may wreak havoc on the operations of a paperless office. The maintenance of a paperless office's software and hardware is also an issue; information technology (IT) workers or consultants are frequently required, as are professionals to service the gear on a regular basis.
- 7. Errors in Data Entry and Learning Curves: The shift to a paperless office, like any other, frequently requires a learning curve, especially in an office setting where staff are not already computer proficient. Data

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- input mistakes may be expensive and cause big issues. Furthermore, data input and filing mistakes might lead to mis-categorizing documents, making it difficult or impossible to locate them afterwards.
- 8. Concerns Over Security: Unauthorized access to digital documents can occur through hacking or insufficient security on the part of workers. Data loss, particularly with sensitive legal and medical documents, can result in considerable responsibility for the firm involved, especially if carelessness is involved. Disposing of digital documents provides a unique challenge, particularly in a shared network setting. Simply deleting a file does not totally remove a digital record, just as throwing a document in the trash does not prevent someone else from recovering the paper later.
- **9. Monotony:** In some circumstances, a specific installation of an office equipment relieves a worker of his office task. This is true in any company's production section, as robots replace employees and boredom becomes a major issue in the office. The introduction of the machine may lower the worker's interest as well as destroy the worker's passion and originality.

13.6 KINDS OF OFFICE MACHINES

The primary goal of office machines is to improve the company's operations and enable employees to work more efficiently. Communication technology such as phones, fax machines, and computers save time and money by eliminating the need to travel to meet with people and transmitting information rapidly. Office machines are mechanical and electrical gadgets that help in the performance of office tasks. They include anything from calculators to computers. Office machinery is required for the smooth operation of a contemporary office. People work in offices, and office gadgets help them accomplish their duties more effectively. They boost productivity. Desktop and laptop computers, other electronic devices, office machinery such as a printer or copier, and furniture and fixtures used to adorn the workplace are all examples of office equipment.

Few office machines includes the following:

- 1. Computer Software: Because information is the backbone of any business, computer software is yet another necessary office component. Apps, anti-virus software, word processing software, and CRM systems are examples of computer software. Companies might choose several options depending on their industry.
- **2. Furniture:** Purchasing the proper office furniture is critical for a variety of reasons. For starters, it will make the office appear more pleasant and professional. The workplace will be welcoming and easy to find for both employees and customers.

- **3. Internet Connection:** Having a high-speed internet connection is unquestionably necessary for every organization. Businesses would be unable to communicate with and exchange information both internally and externally if they did not have a dependable internet connection. Given that many firms function online, a decent internet connection helps with day-to-day activities.
- **4. Stationery:** Office stationery is a necessary everyday necessity that every business should have. Pens, paper, notebooks, post-its, and other important office supplies must be readily available for employees to operate successfully and efficiently.
- **5. Storage Supplies:** Office supplies including storage folders, USB flash discs, and external hard drives assist organizations in keeping everything organized and distinct. Even as technology evolves and businesses operate online, paper work will always be a component of any organization.
- **6. Printers:** Any business with even one PC needs a printer to print tangible copies of electronic documents and data. Despite future promises of paperless offices, that day has yet to come. Printing is required for all types of company documents, regardless of whether the firm is product- or service-oriented. Invoices, packing slips, posters, and letters are all examples of regular office paperwork. Printers may be used not just to transmit electronic files to paper, but also to create composite documents comprising digital data and scanned images.
- 7. **Documents Scanners:** While the fax machine was formerly seen to be an essential piece of office equipment, electronic copies of almost any document are now attainable with the aid of a scanner. A scanner captures a picture of non-electronic documents and transforms them to digital images that may be saved on a computer or emailed.
- 8. Shredders: Hand-tearing papers into parts is not only time-consuming and exhausting, but it is also not always as successful as it should be. Paper shredders shred a sheet of paper into so many bits that reassembling it and recovering the lost information is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible. A shredder is essential in any industry where confidentiality is required by law, such as law, health, and education. Of course, each organization with staff maintains human resource documentation, and most of this information is also sensitive.
- 9. Computer Projector for Presentation or Meeting: A projector, sometimes known as an image projector, is a piece of optical equipment that projects an image (or moving pictures) onto a surface, most frequently a projection screen. Most projectors generate images by shining a light through a tiny transparent lens, however some newer types of projectors may generate images directly by employing lasers. A virtual retinal display, sometimes known as a retinal projector, is a projector that projects an image directly into the retina rather than utilizing an external projection screen.

13.7 FACTORS IN SELECTING OFFICE MACHINES

While choosing office furniture and machines, keep the following aspects in mind:

- 1. Cost: The most important aspect influencing office equipment selections is cost. Office furniture is offered at a variety of pricing points. The availability of funds should be taken into account while selecting office machines and equipment. In most cases, cost is the decisive issue.
- 2. Life: The durability of machinery and equipment varies depending on the material used to construct them. When compared to wooden and plastic furniture, metal furniture is more durable. Branded machines of higher grade are more durable. The durability of office machines and furnishings should be considered while purchasing them.
- **3.** Compact: Office space is both costly and scarce. Saving space should be a consideration while buying workplace machines and furnishings. Furniture that is small in size should be selected. Machines are becoming smaller as a result of nanotechnology.
- **4. Portability**: The portability of office computers and furnishings should be a consideration while selecting them. Heavy furniture cannot be simply transported from one location to another. Furniture that is light in weight should be selected. Office devices should also be conveniently transportable.
- 5. Security: Office equipment and furnishings should not be dangerous. It is dangerous to have a glass top with sharp-cornered furniture. When choosing office machinery and furnishings, safety should be a consideration.
- **6. Multiple Uses:** Office furniture must serve numerous functions. Their selection should be based on their ability to serve several functions. Machines should be chosen for certain purposes.
- 7. Standardization and design: Machines and equipment should be designed to make office work easier. Size, height, and purpose are all factors in design. It should be visually appealing. Design standardization allows for mass purchases at a reduced cost. With standardized machinery, maintenance is also simplified. When purchasing office machinery and furniture, design and standards should be carefully studied.
- **8.** Convenience: Employees spend a significant amount of time in workplaces. They should be able to sit, work, and store papers comfortably. When choosing workplace furniture, comfort should be taken into account. Machines should be easy to operate.

Check Your Progress B

1.	Define automation.
2.	What is Google Workspace?
3.	What are shredders?
1	
4.	Why is internet connection necessary in the business?
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13.8 LET US SUM UP

Every business requirement is to reflect about the types of apparatus their business needs in order for their employees to do their job appropriately. Office equipment helps in managing office-related work and makes your day to day tasks run smoothly. Office equipment is more often than not unnoticed, but essential. The tools, machinery, and furnishings required to complete the tasks in an office are referred to as office equipment.

Workers spend less time on regular activities while using modern office technology, which frees them up for other tasks. Computer aware employees examine computer automation strategies in order to save time spent on regular, repetitive jobs. Employees, for example, save time formatting documents by using templates. Sharing a template with other workers via remote server access, cloud storage, and email from everywhere there is cellular connectivity may enormously boost competency. Google Drive and iCloud are useful services for organizing and sharing frequently used

Modern Office Equipments and Systems templates, shared spreadsheets, and work-related paperwork. The use of organized cloud sharing eliminates the necessity for a data-sharing gobetween.

The various advantages of Modern office design includes the following: Boosts Productivity, leads to Healthier Workforce, Creating a Functional Environment and Eliminates the stress factor. There are various benefits of upgrading the Outdated office equipment include: Superior Output Capability, Energy Saving Capability and Employees will find it easier to use.

Automation refers to a broad variety of technologies that eliminate the need for human intervention in operations. Predetermining decision criteria, subprocess linkages, and associated actions — and embodying those predeterminations in computers – reduces human intervention.

Office automation (OA) refers to the collection of hardware, software, and processes that support the automation of an organization's information processing and communication tasks. It entails using computers and software to digitize, store, process, and transmit the majority of ordinary office operations and procedures. Examples include Microsoft Office 365 and Google Workspace.

Office mechanization is an effort to replace human labor with machine operation in order to perform regular duties more efficiently and effectively. It has several advantages, the most important of which are as follows: It Reduces Monotony, Maintains standardization, Accuracy, Greater Control, Increased Efficiency, Improved Work Quality, Environmentally Friendly and others. Although the use of mechanical devices has several advantages, it also has a number of disadvantages: Surplus of Staff, High installation costs, Operating Costs, Breakdown costs, Concerns Regarding Software and Hardware, Errors in Data Entry and Learning Curves and others.

Office machines are mechanical and electrical gadgets that help in the performance of office tasks. They include anything from calculators to computers. Office machinery is required for the smooth operation of a contemporary office. People work in offices, and office gadgets help them accomplish their duties more effectively. They boost productivity. Desktop and laptop computers, other electronic devices, office machinery such as a printer or copier, and furniture and fixtures used to adorn the workplace are all examples of office equipment.

The various factors affecting selection of Office machines include Cost, Durability, Compact, Portability, Security, Multiple uses, Convenience and Design & standardization.

13.9 KEYWORDS

Automation: It refers to a broad variety of technologies that eliminate the need for human intervention in operations. Predetermining decision criteria, subprocess linkages, and associated actions — and embodying those predeterminations in computers – reduces human intervention.

Google Workspace: It is a bundle of cloud services, productivity, and collaboration tools, as well as software and solutions created and marketed by Google. It is a collection of communication and collaboration applications designed for business users.

Microsoft Office 365 suite: It is an example of office automation. By centralizing all documentation and resources, the software saves time and money. The MSO-365 suite is a hosted, online version of Microsoft Office software, similar to the classic installation version.

Office Automation: It refers to the collection of hardware, software, and processes that support the automation of an organization's information processing and communication tasks. It entails using computers and software to digitize, store, process, and transmit the majority of ordinary office operations and procedures

Office Equipment: The tools, machinery, and furnishings required to complete the tasks in an office are referred to as office equipment.

Office Machines: These are mechanical and electrical gadgets that help in the performance of office tasks.

Scanner: Scanner captures a picture of non-electronic documents and transforms them to digital images that may be saved on a computer or emailed.

Shredders: Shredders shred a sheet of paper into so many bits that reassembling it and recovering the lost information is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible.

13.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1. Why is office equipment necessary?
- 2. Explain the concept of modern office equipment. Provide a few examples.
- 3. What are the various advantages of modern office design?
- 4. What are the various benefits of upgrading the outdated office equipment?
- 5. Explain the concept of office automation with examples.
- 6. What is office mechanization? What are its various advantages and disadvantages?
- 7. What are the various kinds of office machines?
- 8. What are the various factors affecting selection of office machines?

Note: These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.

UNIT 14 MODERN OFFICE SYSTEM

Structure

- 14.0 Objectives
- 14.1 Introduction
- 14.2 Technological Communication
 - 14.2.1 Meaning of Web-Conferencing
 - 14.2.2 Easy, Effective and Reliable Video Solutions for Any Meeting Space
 - 14.2.3 Modern Enterprises Video Communication
- 14.3 Office System and Automation
 - 14.3.1 E-Gov Office Automation
 - 14.3.2 System Automation
 - 14.3.3 e-Office Software Office Automation Software
- 14.4 Technology Internet and Cloud used in office
 - 14.4.1 Smart Cloud Based Office Solutions
 - 14.4.2 Benefits and Drawbacks of Cloud Computing?
 - 14.4.3 Cloud Storage
 - 14.4.4 Role of Cloud Computing
 - 14.4.5 Impact of IoT in Cloud
 - 14.4.6 Different Types of Cloud Computing and Their Benefits
- 14.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 14.6 Keywords
- 14.7 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 14.8 Terminal Questions

14.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- identify various tools for communicating effectively in offices;
- explain how technology enables communication at the workplace;
- describe the different types of solutions provided by technology for ease of communication; and
- describe the significance of office automation in various organizations including government sector organizations.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, a company's office is more than just a physical location where business transactions take place, it rather serves as an extension of its brand. It is the hub of ideas that makes the business unique. As a result, when it comes to designing a modern office, many companies, from large corporation

to small business, pay close attention to the details. As a business advantages, a modern office includes technology. Businesses can improve their efficiency and employees day-to-day processes easier. The modern office is heavily reliant on software and mobile applications that assist businesses in learning about the market and increasing their market share. Modern offices allow employee to communicate more easily about projects that aid the business in keeping workflow on track and keep the team connected while working toward a common goal.

14.2 TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNICATION

14.2.1 Meaning of Web-Conferencing

In simple terms, Web-Conferencing refers to online service with the help of which one can hold meetings, conferences, presentations, training sessions, etc. using the internet, where there can be two or more participants from anywhere in the world, can see, talk and hear each other in real-time.



Figure 14.1: Web Conferencing

Any basic web-conferencing would require a microphone, a sound system, a web browser, a monitor. For video conferences, connecting to a web conference would also require a webcam. In any web-conferencing there can be three different contributors:

- **Host** The person who organizes the meeting , responsible for the agenda and participants
- **Presenters** Person who would be delivering the content of the meeting (can be different from host and there can be multiple presenters)
- **Guests** People who receive invites from the host with all details and are the audience of the conference, meeting, events.

Although web-conferencing has been gaining popularity in the last few years due to advancement in technology, post-covid, it is now seen as an alternative to physical meetings.

14.2.2 Easy, Effective and Reliable Video Solutions for Any Meeting Space

Face-to-face communication or physical meetings obviously have certain advantages. For example, one can perceive and send body-language cues, and to use non-verbal cues to reflect emotions which may not be verbally expressed. But, as mentioned in the last section, due to advancement in technology and with unprecedented COVID impact, it is no longer uncommon to see communication happening in virtual space instead of physical one. Nowadays virtual meetings are replacing physical meetings. The various parameters for virtual meetings to be successful are as follows:

- **Easy** Adding complexity cannot be an alternative to physical meetings, so. The devices and platforms to be used should be user friendly
- **Effective** Should not dampen the intent or message of the meetings in any way. The communication should be as effective as in any physical meeting.
- Reliable Multiple technical failures, failed to prevent data leakage and privacy concerns can impact reliability and should be minimized.

There is a surge in the market with various companies offering easy, effective and reliable video solutions for any meeting space. The right solution which may be opted for is largely dependent on the types of meetings one intends to hold. Some of the popular players in the area are:

- Zoom
- Webex meetings
- Microsoft Teams
- Google meet
- GoTOMeeting

and many more. Every player has a certain advantage and depending on the needs of the user, one should choose the application which is best suited to their needs.

Check Your Progress A

1.	What is web-conferencing?

Modern	Office	System
MUUULIII	Omc	System

2.	Wh	nat are the different contributors to web-conferencing?	
3.	Fill	in the blanks:	
	i)	Web-Conferencing refers to with the help of which one can hold meetings, conferences, presentations, training sessions, etc. using the internet	
	ii)	is a person who organizes the meeting, responsible for the agenda and participants	
	iii)	In face-to-face communication we can use cues, unlike in virtual meet.	
	iv)	ZOOM is one of the popular companies providing solution.	

14.2.3 Modern Enterprises Video Communication

Video conferencing is one of the web-conferencing solutions which permits the participants from different physical locations to hold face-to-face meetings without having to meet physically at one location.

Use of Video Conferencing

- Company meetings
- Online classes for schools and colleges
- Interviews
- Job training sessions
- Medical consultation
- Business deals
- Academic seminars
- Political meetings

The vital benefit offered by video conferencing over teleconferencing is that users can see one other, which further allows them to connect and bond with each other in a better way. Video conferencing can take place in multiple ways, for example: Webcams can be attached to or incorporated into laptops, tablets, and desktop computers or even devices like smartphones can help us in connecting with others over video conferencing. In such cases, the communication is often sent across Internet protocols using a software-based platform.

Following are the Essential components required for any video conferencing:

- 1. Laptops, tablets, desktop computers or smartphones
- 2. Web camera or built in camera



- 3. Software-based platform for communication over internet protocols
- 4. Internet connection

As stated in the previous section, with lockdowns in many areas of the world, including India, causing many people to work from home or attend online classes, video conferencing systems such as Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams witnessed a boom in their usage pandemic. Many business and academic conferences yearly meetings and seminar sessions were conducted via internet video conferencing services. Financial advisors, therapists, tutors, and attorneys, for example, were able to meet with their clients and conduct one-on-one consultations using video conferencing. During the pandemic, certain judicial hearings and court cases were fully conducted via video conference. Doctors and other medical professionals also embraced telemedicine in far greater numbers than they did prior to the pandemic.

14.3 OFFICE SYSTEM AND AUTOMATION

14.3.1 E-Gov Office Automation

E-Gov is defined as "delivery of government services, information to the public using electronic means". The dictionary definition of automation is "the technique of making an apparatus, a process, or a system operate automatically." To put it in simple words, reducing human interventions wherever possible is automation. E-Gov Office automation aims to automate workflows within government departments and agencies to enable efficient government procedures and to make these processes visible to citizens.

Automation plays an important role in both:

- Internal operations of e-gov offices, where the objective is efficient, speedy and transparent government administration services with proper accountability.
- As well as external operations where the objective is efficient, speedy, accountable interactions with the public, thus satisfactorily fulfilling their needs and expectations in respect to various online services.

Office Administrative processes as given below are some of those activities which should be given paramount importance from the automation perspective:

- Automation of entire life cycle of movement of files and correspondences/DAK from creation to archival with process unification across departments and agencies for speedy file management
- Automation of query routing and auto-allocation of queries to the respective departments which can increase the speed of processing
- Automation of alerts, notifications, reminders using automated system defined escalation matrix for faster execution and timely responses

- Digital Signature integration for pdf documents to avoid hassle and decrease the processing
- Barcode Integration for file and correspondence tracking to avoid delays and losses due to human error, misplacement error
- For office note management which refers to the entire process of planning, design and implementation of work, automation would increase the overall efficiency

Few advantages of E-Gov office automation are:

- 1. Significant cost savings in government operations
- 2. Reduction of the administrative burden
- 3. Help in building an agile operation, ensuring more efficient and effective Government to Citizen (G2C), Government to Business (G2B), and Government to Government(G2G) processes.

14.3.2 System Automation

In the last section, we already discussed the definition of automation. This section explains the office system automation. Technology is transforming the way people operate in offices and organisations. With this technological advancement, traditional systems and office practices are quickly becoming extinct. For example, memos have been replaced by e-mails, employee timesheet stamping has been rendered useless by biometrics etc.

The office automation system is the tool that facilitates the movement of data from one system to another by itself without any human intervention . Office system automation would

- Eliminate any paperwork
- Minimize the human errors and inaccuracies
- Reduces the storage space with easy retrieval
- Allows multiple people to access data at same time thus making parallel processing possible

Advantages of office system automation:

- Mobile Compatibility
- Saves Time and Resources
- Availability of Reports and Analytics
- Facilitates Easier Creation of Workflows

Even with so many known benefits of an office automation system, many organizations and businesses are still reluctant and struggling to adopt it as it appears to be too overwhelming for them. However, with a structured approach the process is quite achievable.



14.3.3 e-Office Software Office Automation Software

Office Automation helps in managing data, with the help of a system created using different computer systems and software.

In its endeavour to execute key ICT projects of government at all levels, National Informatics Centre (NIC) has developed many platforms and software. E-Office is one such product; it's a "digital workplace solution for all government employees".

The goal of the e-Office is to aid governance by facilitating more efficient and transparent inter- and intra-governmental activities. The goal of e-Office is for all government offices to function in a way that is simple, responsive, effective, and transparent. Because of the Open Architecture on which e-Office is based, it is a reusable framework and a standard reusable product that can be replicated by governments at all levels, including the central, state, and local levels. The product unifies disparate operations and systems into a unified framework.

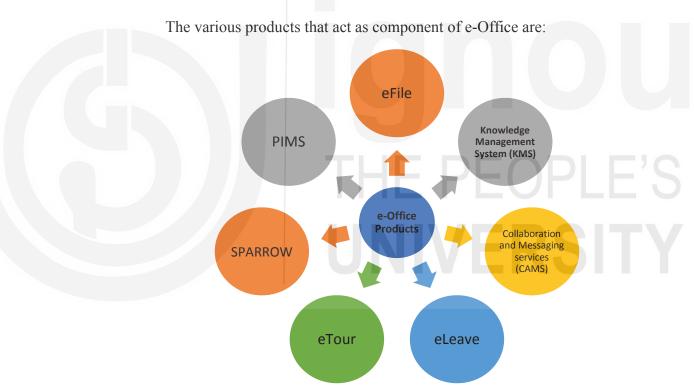


Figure. 14.2: Products of e-Office

• **eFile:** As part of the country's inclusive governance, the government has placed a strong focus on enhancing efficiency and internal procedures, increasing openness in decision-making, and incorporating citizen engagement. The creation of files, noting in the files, making choices at various levels, and eventually issuing decisions as letters and notifications are all part of the governance process. eFile enables smooth flow of work in this regard.

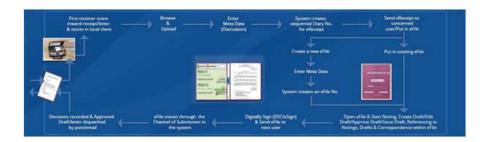


Figure. 14.3: eFile

Source: NIC.in (https://www.nic.in/products/e-office/)

• **Knowledge Management System (KMS):** For smooth functioning of various activities, the government has to manage a large volume of documentation. Having a single repository of documents from which all department/ministry users may access information is aided by maintaining a central repository of documents. Users may produce and manage electronic documents that can be browsed, searched, and shared with e-Office KMS. It may also keep track of the many versions that have been edited by different users (Tracking history).



Figure. 14.4: Knowledge Management System

Source: NIC.in (https://www.nic.in/products/e-office/)

• Collaboration And Messaging Services (CAMS): It helps users in communicating efficiently along with sharing relevant information with each other in real life. With the assistance of CAMS, a more connected workplace can be provided to employees as it provides a unified communication and collaboration environment.



Figure 14.5: Collaboration And Messaging Services

Source: NIC.in (https://www.nic.in/products/e-office/)

• **eLeave:** It is a workflow-based system that allows the user to apply for leave online, follow the status of application, and view information about leaves taken and balance. The technology aids in the elimination of paper-based applications as well as quicker and more time-bound processing.



Figure 14.6: eLeave

Source: NIC.in (https://www.nic.in/products/e-office/)

• eTour: It is a system that makes it easier to handle employee tour programmes efficiently. All tour requests are correctly accounted for with this system. Employees may apply for, cancel, approve/reject, and examine tour records without having to go through the tedious process of filling out paperwork. The system keeps track of the employee's tour and plans in detail.



Figure 14.7: eTour

Source: NIC.in (https://www.nic.in/products/e-office/)

• SPARROW: It is an online system based on the State Government/Central Government's thorough performance review dossier for each member of the Service. The goal of this system is to make it easier for officers to fill out their Performance Appraisal Report (PAR) electronically in a way that is not only user-friendly but also allows them to do it from anywhere at any time. Officers will have similar convenience at various stages in the workflow hierarchy of the filling and submission procedure. The technology is also intended to speed up the submission of fully completed APARs.



Figure 14.8: SPARROW

Source: NIC.in (https://www.nic.in/products/e-office/)

• **PIMS:** Personnel Information Management System (PIMS) is a workflow-based system for keeping track of an employee's information like their identity, skills, salary information, etc. Users can input and amend employee personal data and employment records using PIMS, depending on their access and position rights.



Figure 14.9: PIMS

Source: NIC.in (https://www.nic.in/products/e-office/)

Check Your Progress B		
1.	What is E-Gov?	
	THE DEAL	
2.	List down different office administrative processes in E-Gov which are important for automation.	
3.	List down different advantages of the office system automation	
4.	List down different products of the e-Office.	

	••••	
4.	Fill	in the blanks:
	i)	E-Gov Office automation aims to workflows within government departments and agencies to enable government procedures.
	ii)	The is the tool that facilitates the movement of data from one system to another by itself without any human intervention
	iii)	is transforming the way people operate in offices and organisations
	iv)	is an online system based on the State Government/Central Government's thorough performance review dossier for each member of the Service.

14.4 TECHNOLOGY INTERNET AND CLOUD USED IN OFFICE

14.4.1 Smart Cloud-based Office Solutions

The 'Cloud Office' refers to a variety of internet-based computing services, including collaboration and communication tools that include email, file-sharing, conferencing, instant messaging, document management, etc. 'Cloud computing' refers to a cloud alternative to what organizations conventionally manage in-house. For instance, leveraging a webmail service as an alternative to hosting its own email-server by the organization. Microsoft Office 365 and Google's G-Suite are the prominent cloud-based office solutions leveraged by organizations across the globe.

Cloud-based office systems help in cost reduction and improved collaborations in today's "anytime, anywhere" working environment. These cloud-based solutions contribute to enhanced efficiency and productivity levels in the organizations. Cloud-based office solutions help to streamline setup processes, lessen IT costs and optimize maintenance expenses for all applications, communications, data and backup requirements of the organization. The rising number of connected devices and ease in deployment and usage are some of the key drivers of smart cloud-based office solutions.

The Cloud Office Services market is categorized into 4 major segments (by component):

- Cloud office migration tools
- Cloud office collaboration services

- Cloud office professional services
- Cloud office suite

Some of the popular items that are globally transferred from source systems to cloud-based platforms include the following:

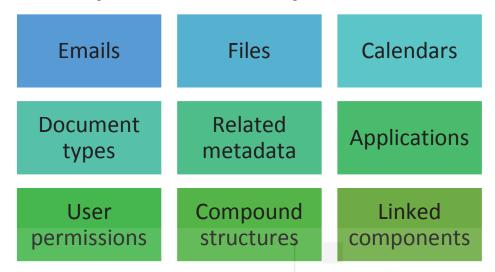


Figure 14.1: Items transferred from Source System to cloud- based Platform

14.4.2 Benefits and Drawbacks of Cloud Computing

There are a plethora of benefits and drawbacks that cloud computing provides to the organization:

Benefits:

Reduced support and hardware needs

A cloud computing infrastructure needs a smaller IT staff than a conventional IT setup, thereby requiring reduced support and hardware needs

Improved global collaboration

Cloud-based solutions help professionals to connect with other professionals outside the organization. It enables them to easily access their work 'anywhere, anytime', even using mobile technology

• Green alternative

As cloud computing requires less office resources such as IT equipment, it focuses on less consumption of electricity and leads to optimization of energy consumption, leading to energy efficiency and low maintenance costs

Data backup

Through storing the data on the cloud, it helps in easy backup and restoration of data using cloud solutions

Data security

Cloud computing helps to store and handle the data securely

Unlimited storage capacity

Cloud carries huge storing capacity for different formats of data such as documents, images, audio, video, etc.

Drawbacks:

• Internet connectivity services

Relying on cloud computing services needs high dependence on reliable internet connectivity. For using cloud computing, organizations need to have more bandwidth, consistent internet access, speed of connection, etc.

• Highly dynamic field

The field of cloud computing is highly dynamic as the vendors tend to go out of the business quite frequently as this bring challenge to the continued service for a long period of time

Chances of hacking

Although, cloud computing services are very safe and secure, there are chances of hacking while transferring the organization's sensitive information to the third-parties, i.e. cloud-computing service providers

United control

As the cloud infrastructure is managed, controlled and owned by the service provider, the organization using the services has limited control over the function and implementation of processes, systems and other services within the infrastructure

Vendor lock-in

Organizations using services of a vendor may face difficulties in transferring those services to another vendor. As the difference between the platforms provided by one vendor and another is quite significant, the organizations face difficulties in switching the platforms

14.4.3 Cloud Storage

Definition:

Cloud storage is a cloud computing model that allows saving data, files and other documents in an "off-site location" that is accessible via public internet or any other private internet connection. It delivers a cost-effective alternative to saving data in the organization on hard drives and other storage networks. Cloud storage offers the benefit of flexibility to scale-up or scale-down the capacity used as per the change in requirements from time-to-time.

Working of Cloud Storage:

Cloud storage is purchased from a third-party cloud provider who owns, controls, and handles data storage capacity and provides it through the internet in a "pay-as-you-go" approach. These cloud storage providers



oversee capacity, durability, and security in order to make data available to apps all over the world.

Organizations often connect to the storage cloud using a website, a mobile app, or a web portal, either over the internet or through a private connection. Depending on the scale of the cloud provider's operations, the server with which they connect delivers the data to a group of servers situated in one or more data centres. The providers store the same data on multiple machines so that if a server is taken down for maintenance or due to an outage, one can still access the data.

Benefits of Cloud Storage:

Storing data in the cloud lets IT departments transform three areas:

Reduced costs

With cloud storage, there are no hardware costs. The capacity can be altered on demand and organizations are required to pay for storage that they eventually use

• Time to Deployment

Cloud storage allows IT to quickly deliver the exact amount of storage whenever required. This allows IT to emphasize on solving complex application problems instead of managing storage systems

Scalability

As the capacity is virtually unlimited, the organizations can scale up as per the requirements, thereby overcoming the constraints of on-premise storage systems

Continuity of business operations

Cloud storage supports business continuity in scenarios such as natural disasters or terrorist attacks that can hamper the operations of business

14.4.4 Role of Cloud Computing

Cloud computing offers a convenient way to access servers, storage, databases and a complete host of application services over the Internet. Cloud providers function and manage the network-attached hardware tools needed for the application services, offering and leveraging the resources organizations need through an internet application. The involved servers give utilities such as stockpiling, security, etc. Cloud computing offers these types of facilities focused on an organization's needs.

Cloud-based office systems help in cost reduction and improved collaborations in today's "anytime, anywhere" working environment. These cloud-based solutions contribute to enhanced efficiency and productivity levels in the organizations. Cloud-based office solutions help to streamline setup processes, lessen IT costs and optimize maintenance expenses.

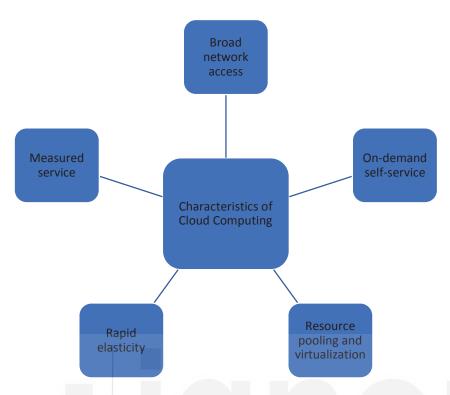


Figure 14.11: Characteristics of Cloud Computing

Source: NIST definition

14.4.5 Impact of IoT in Cloud

Cloud computing and IoT have emerged as the two complementary potential internet technologies. The Internet of Things (IoT) is a global network of computing devices and machines that facilitate data-sharing without human or computer involvement. When combined, they offer a host of benefits and advantages. The increased use of the 'Internet of Things' in the cloud has helped in the development and execution of scalable apps and business models.

IoT devices require storage in order to exchange data for purposeful activities. IoT's integration with cloud, such as Stone Fly Cloud Connect to Microsoft Azure, provides users with enhanced space that can be augmented as and when required.

To communicate and connect with each other, the huge volume of data provided by IoT devices requires extreme performance. IoT in the cloud offers the connectivity needed to exchange data amongst devices.

14.4.6 Different Types of Cloud Computing and Their Benefits

The prominent cloud computing models are:

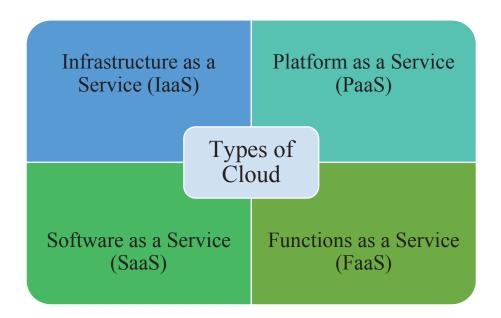


Figure 14.12: Types of Cloud

Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS)

IaaS serves as the fundamental for cloud IT and is a cloud computing service that often includes networking capabilities, machines (virtual or dedicated hardware), and data storage space. Some of the examples are Amazon EC2, Windows Azure, etc.

It allows consumers to access processing power without having to invest in expensive hardware or managing servers providing maximum control and flexibility over the IT resources. Most of the IaaS packages include servers, networking, storage, and virtualization components. Users that utilize IaaS are in charge of installing and maintaining databases, operating systems, applications, and security components.

Platform as a Service (PaaS)

It is an upgraded version of IaaS and it delivers the computing platform and solution stack as a service in addition to the IT infrastructure. PaaS is a cloud computing service that provides a platform for developers to use when creating bespoke apps. Some examples are: AWS Elastic Beanstalk, Force.com. by Salesforce, Google App Engine, etc.

PaaS makes software development simple even for non-experts, since anybody can create an application using a web browser and a few mouse clicks. PaaS allows developers in multiple places to collaborate on the same application, allowing for geographical freedom.

Software as a Service (SaaS)

The offerings of SaaS provide an amalgamation of the service offerings of both IaaS and PaaS. It provides application-level services with customizations offered for specific business needs. It offers consumers ondemand access to web-based software applications. It provides a fully working programme with a browser-based interface that consumers may

access through the Internet. Some examples are: SAP Business ByDesign, Zoho CRM, Microsoft Office 365, etc.

There is no upfront setup fee because customers may start using the app right away after signing up. There are no hardware costs because the service provider provides the computing power. It also provides compatibility across devices. It also gives a finished product that the service provider runs and manages.

Functions as a Service (FaaS)

FaaS offers serverless computing. Server-less computing model does away with low level decisions pertaining to infrastructure and server management as the application architect is taken care of by cloud service providers. It is the newest and most popular model prevalent today. Some examples are: Google Cloud Function, Webtask.io, Iron.io, AWS Lambda, etc.

It increases the efficiency as developers are not required to consider server operations because they are hosted externally. It helps developers build efficiency by not letting them focus on server logistics. It is highly scalable.

Check Your Progress C

1.	What is a cloud office?	
	THE PEOPLE	
	// IINIMEDQIE	
2.	What is cloud storage?	
3.	Fill in the blanks:	
۶.		
	i) Amazon EC2 is an example of	
	ii) Force.com. by Salesforce is an example of	
	iii) is associated with serverless computing.	
	iv) incorporates both IaaS and PaaS service offerings.	

14.5 LET US SUM UP

Web-Conferencing refers to online service with the help of which one can hold meetings, conferences, presentations, training sessions, etc. using the internet, where there can be two or more participants anywhere in the world, who can see, talk and hear each other in real-time. In any web-conferencing there can be three different contributors: host, presenters and guests.

E-Gov is defined as "delivery of government services, information to the public using electronic means". The dictionary definition of automation is "the technique of making an apparatus, a process, or a system operate automatically." To put it in simple words, reducing human interventions wherever possible is automation. E-Gov Office automation aims to automate workflows within government departments and agencies to enable efficient government procedures and to make these processes visible to citizens.

The office automation system is the tool that facilitates the movement of data from one system to another by itself without any human intervention. Office system automation would eliminate any paperwork, minimize the human errors and inaccuracies, reduce the storage space with easy retrieval and allow multiple people to access data at same time thus making parallel processing possible.

Office Automation helps in managing data, with the help of a system created using different computer systems and software.

In its endeavor to execute key ICT projects of government at all levels, National Informatics Centre (NIC) has developed many platforms and software. E-Office is one such product; it's a "digital workplace solution for all government employees". The various products that act as component of e-Office are eFile, Knowledge Management System (KMS), Collaboration and Messaging services (CAMS), eLeave, eTour, SPARROW and PIMS.

The 'Cloud Office' refers to a variety of internet-based computing services, including collaboration and communication tools that include email, file-sharing, conferencing, instant messaging, document management, etc. 'Cloud computing' refers to a cloud alternative to what organizations conventionally manage in-house.

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Cloud storage is a cloud computing model that allows saving data, files and other documents in an "off-site location" that is accessible via public internet or any other private internet connection. It delivers a cost-effective alternative to saving data in the organization on hard drives and other storage networks.

Cloud storage offers the benefit of flexibility to scale-up or scale-down the capacity used as per the change in requirements from time-to-time.

14.6 KEYWORDS

Cloud storage: Cloud storage is a cloud computing model that allows saving data, files and other documents in an "off-site location" that is accessible via public internet or any other private internet connection.

E-Gov: E-Gov is defined as delivery of government services, information to the public using electronic means.

Web-Conferencing: Web-Conferencing is an online service by which one can hold meetings, conferencing, presentations, training sessions using the internet, where there can be two or more participants anywhere in the world, and can see, talk and hear each other in real-time.

14.7 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- A. i. online service ii. Host iii. body language iv. web-conferencing
- B. i. automatic ,efficient ii. Office automation system iii. Technology iv. SPARROW
- C. i. IaaS ii. PaaS iii. FaaS iv. SaaS

14.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1. Write brief notes on following:
 - i) Cloud Computing
 - ii) Web-conferencing
 - iii) System Automation
 - iv) Cloud Storage
- 2. Differentiate between the following:
 - i) Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) and Platform as a Service (PaaS)
 - ii) Software as a Service (SaaS) and Functions as a Service (FaaS)
- 3. Explain the meaning and functions of Web-conferencing
- 4. Explain the advantages of using cloud computing.
- 5. Explain the meaning and significance of System automation.

Note: These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.

UNIT 15 BANKING FACILITIES AND MODES OF PAYMENT

Structure

- 15.0 Objectives
- 15.1 Introduction
- 15.2 Types of Accounts
- 15.3 Passbook and Cheque Book
- 15.4 Other Forms Used in Banks
- 15.5 Online Banking
 - 15.5.1 Internet Banking
 - 15.5.2 Mobile Banking
 - 15.5.3 Automated Teller Machines (ATM)
 - 15.5.4 Debit and Credit Cards
 - 15.5.5 Mobile Wallet
- 15.6 Types of Payments
 - 15.6.1 Cheque
 - 15.6.2 Indian Postal Order
 - 15.6.3 Online Payments
- 15.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 15.9 Key Words
- 15.10 Terminal Questions

15.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- know about the different types of bank accounts;
- differentiate between checkbook and passbook;
- know about the different types of banking forms;
- understand the different types of online banking; and
- understand the different types of payment methods.

15.1 INTRODUCTION

Banks are the backbone for the smooth functioning of any economy and plays a central role in facilitating economic activity through three interrelated processes namely financial intermediation, asset transformation, and money creation. Banks provide three core banking services: deposit collection, payment arrangement, and loan underwriting. Banks also offer financial



services such as cash, asset, and risk management. With the global advances in technology, traditional banks have started offering online banking and payment services. Technological innovation not only enables a broader reach for consumer banking and financial services but also enhances its capacity for continued and inclusive growth.

15.2 TYPES OF ACCOUNTS

An individual can open different kinds of bank accounts depending upon their needs and requirements set by the bank. Initially, there were only four types of bank accounts that were operating in India. These included the Current Account, Savings Account, Recurring Deposit Account, and Fixed Deposit Account. But later with the advancement in the banking sector, other types of bank accounts got introduced including the DEMAT account and the NRI account. A brief description of various types of bank accounts is given below:

- 1. Savings Account: As the name suggests, the savings accounts can be opened by an individual or jointly by two people to save money. This is the most common account opened by an individual. The main benefit of opening a savings bank account is that the bank pays you interest for opening this type of account with them. Given below are a few features of the Savings account:
 - There is no limit to the number of times the account holder can deposit money in this account but there is a restriction on the number of times money can be withdrawn from this account;
 - The rate of interest that an account holder get varies from 4% to 6% per annum;
 - There may / may not be a minimum balance that needs to be maintained for this type of an account
 - The savings account holders can get an ATM/Debit/Rupay Card if they want to;
 - Savings bank account is further divided into two types: Basic Savings Bank Deposit Account (BSBDA) and the other one is Basic Saving Bank Deposit Accounts Small Scheme(BSBDS); and
 - The savings bank account is most popular amongst students, pensioners, and working professionals.
- 2. Current Account: The second type of bank account is the current bank account. These accounts are not used for the purpose of savings. Some important pointers related to the current bank account have been discussed below:
 - This type of bank account is mostly opened by businessmen.
 Associations, Institutions, Companies, Religious Institutions, and other business-related works;



- There is no fixed number of times that money can either be deposited or withdrawn from such accounts;
- Internet banking is available;
- This type of bank account does not have any fixed maturity;
- Overdraft facility is available for current bank accounts; and
- There is no interest that is paid on such accounts.
- 3. Recurring Deposit Account: Recurring Deposit account or RD account is a form of account wherein the account holder needs to deposit a fixed amount every month until it reaches the fixed maturity date. The features of the Recurring deposit account have been discussed below:
 - Any individual or an Institution can open a recurring deposit account either separately or jointly;
 - Periodic or monthly installments that need to be added can be as low as Rs. 50/- or may vary from bank to bank;
 - The range of months for which an RD account can be opened varies from 6 months to 120 months;
 - The interest rate varies depending upon the bank you choose to open an account with;
 - Nomination facility is also available for RC accounts; and
 - Premature withdrawal of the amount is permitted, provided a sum of the amount is deducted as a penalty.
- **4. Fixed Deposit Account:** FD or a fixed deposit account is another type of bank account that can be opened in any Public or Private sector bank. The list of important things that need to be known with respect to the fixed deposit account has been mentioned below:
 - It is a one-time deposit and one-time take away account. Under this type of account, the account holder needs to deposit a fixed amount sum (as per their wish) for a fixed time period
 - The amount deposited in the FD account can only be withdrawn all at once and not in installments
 - Banks pay interest on the fixed deposit account
 - The rate of interest depends upon the amount you deposit and the time duration of the FD
 - Full repayment of the amount is available before the maturity date of FD
- **5. DEMAT Account:** Shares and securities which can be held in electronic format constitute the DEMAT account. The DEMAT account also stands for Dematerialized Account. Given below the points that need to be known by a candidate regarding the DEMAT Account:



- There are only two depository organizations that manage this type of bank account in India. This includes: National Securities Depository Limited and Central Depository Services Limited
- This helps facilitate easy trade of bonds and shares
- Helps in conducting stress-free transactions of shares
- KYC is required for opening the DEMAT Account
- Transaction cost is reduced
- Traders can work from anywhere
- The transfer of securities can be done with reduced paperwork
- **6. NRI Account:** To fulfill the bank requirements of a Non-Residential Indian or a Person of India Origin, the option of an NRI account is available. The NRI Accounts are further divided into three types:
 - 1. NRO (Non-Resident Ordinary Rupees) Account: This shall allow you to transfer your foreign earnings easily to India. It can be opened in the form of an FD/RD/Current/Savings account. These accounts can be opened by an individual or jointly opened.
 - **2. NRE** (**Non-Resident External Rupees**) **Account:** When an Indian citizen moves abroad to work there, his/her account needs to be converted into an NRE account. This account can be jointly opened with an Indian resident.
 - **3. FCNR** (**Foreign Currency Non-Resident**) **Account:** This type of account can be opened to manage an international currency. It can only be in the form of a Term deposit and can be withdrawn after the maturity period only.

To help manage the finances here are some excellent reasons to have a bank account-

- Bank accounts offer simplicity for transactions. one can easily withdraw money and make payments if they have a bank account.
- Having bank accounts offers a safe treasury of your hard-earned money and even if the bank or the unions are close you are sure to get back your money.
- Most banks and financial institutions offer the account holders free or low-cost services; hence bank accounts are cheaper.
- It is an easy way to grow money. Most banks offer an interest rate when you put your money in a savings account. The interest will help your money grow over time.
- It offers easy access to credits. Having a bank account is favorable as banks provide the facility to access credits to their customers for Personal loans, home loans, education loans, etc.



15.3 PASSBOOK AND CHEQUE BOOK

A passbook is a bank document given to all bank account holders by the bank which lists the various transactions that have been made into (credited) and out of (debited) that account. It becomes mandatory to record transactions when the account holder starts initiating the transactions. A passbook provides tracking of the money spent, recording account statements as well as monitoring the transactions effortlessly.

Traditionally, a passbook is used for accounts with a low transaction volume, such as savings accounts. A bank teller or postmaster would write by hand the date and amount of the transaction and the updated balance and enter his or her initials. In the late 20th century, small dot matrix or inkjet printers were introduced that were capable of updating the passbook at the account holder's convenience, either at an automated teller machine or a passbook printer, either in a self-serve mode, by post, or in a branch.

Passbooks appeared in the 18th century, allowing customers to hold transaction information in their own hands for the first time. Up until then, transactions were recorded in ledgers at the bank only, so customers had no history of their deposits and withdrawals. The passbook, which was around the size of a passport, ensured that customers had control over their information, and was called a "passbook" because it was used as a way to identify the account holder without needing further identification.

With the rapid growth of technology, the old printed passbooks of the old days are speedily being replaced by digital passbooks. Unlike traditional bank passbooks, a digital passbook is a digital way of recording banking transactions without any need to visit a bank branch. Digital passbooks do not require any manual processing of transactions. Likewise, the traditional passbook, a digital passbook also showcases all the transactions made over a period of time along with the debited amount.

Cheque books are provided to all current and savings account holders. Defaulting on a cheque is punishable by law. A checkbook is a folder or small book containing preprinted paper instruments issued to checking account holders and used to pay for goods or services. A checkbook contains sequentially numbered checks that account holders can use as a bill of exchange.

In recent years in developed countries there are many design choices available to the account holder for their cheques. A cheque book is a book, which contains several leaves which enable you to draw your own money from the bank, where you have an account or you can issue cheques to third parties. A passbook keeps a record of the latest balance available in the account, based on which the account holder can draw the amount through the check book or make payment to a third party.



15.4 OTHER FORMS USED IN BANKS

Banks are one of the most regulated financial institutions around the world. The banking sector needs to ensure that all its customers comply with regulatory requirements. Compliance is very important and central banks and other global watchdogs provide stringent oversight. Thus, there are many forms used by banks to provide their services. Some of the most commonly used documents in banking are discussed below:

- 1. **Deposit Slip:** The deposit slip is a common banking document that anyone depositing cash or check into an account will need. It is a form on which the depositor indicates the date of the transaction, the depositor's name, account number, and amount deposited. Various benefits of deposit slips are stated below:
 - Banks rely on deposit slips to maintain a ledger of deposited funds;
 - The customer can also use it as proof that the bank received the funds if the deposit was incorrectly counted;
 - The slip contains the depositor's name, the date, the depositor's account number, and the amount;
 - The deposit slip also indicates whether the depositor made the deposit using cash or a check. This information is useful when there is a need for an audit:
 - A deposit slip needs to be signed before presenting it to the teller.

 The teller must also sign the deposit slip, for it to become valid.

 After signing, the teller must issue a receipt for that deposit;
 - Deposit slips can also be used to transport money, whereby you deposit cash in one branch and then withdraw it from another bank branch;
 - Clients can also use deposit slips to make direct payments, instead of issuing checks, when they need to prove they made payments on time, such as when paying rent, taxes, fines, etc.
- 2. **Debit Card:** Banks issue debit cards to account holders. The card helps the individual gain access to their money electronically. Most people use debit cards to withdraw money from automated teller machines (ATMs) or to pay for goods or services at shopping malls and other point-of-sale locations. The debit card allows for debit or credit transactions on an individual's account. Unlike credit cards, debit cards protect you from going into debt. However, in a few cases, you may incur a small debt if you signed up for overdraft protection. But the negative balance is usually incredibly small.

Using a debit card comes with some risks on the part of the user. For instance, if it gets lost, someone may use it to make an online purchase. Fortunately, most banks allow for a chargeback, if the user reports the



Banking Facilities and Modes of Payment

debit card loses promptly, and the fraudster fails to provide the right billing address. Debit cards expire after a certain period, which appears on the front side of the card, after which the user must apply for a replacement card. Some banks may charge you a debit card maintenance fee monthly or annually, while others may only charge you a fee when you renew your debit card. The fact that debit cards typically have daily purchase limits also ensures you cannot spend too much money with the card within a short time. Some debit and credit cards also offer valuable reward programs.

- 3. Bank Statement: The bank statement is a financial document used in the banking sector to show a summary of account transactions. The document is usually prepared every month and takes into account transaction details in a deposit or a credit card account. The statement contains particulars such as date, type of transaction, amounts involved, and balances. Bank statements are incredibly useful documents for any business or individual. In the present scenario e-statement comes into picture and one can download e-statement flow a respective Bank portal. You can use the document in the following ways:
 - Check your bank balance and reconcile your accounts;
 - Identify errors or fraudulent activities;
 - Track your income and expenditure;
 - Get to know your net worth;
 - Help to document your finances; and
 - To determine credit-worthiness.
- 4. Loan agreement form: The Loan Agreement form is one of the most commonly used documents in the banking sector. Whenever one needs to apply for a loan, the bank will provide the loan agreement form to be filled by the borrower and verified by the lender. A bank will rely on other documents to establish the creditworthiness of the borrower. The loan agreement form contains a commitment to a repayment schedule and may include collateral in case of an inability to pay.
- 5. Letter of Credit (LoC): Banks use a letter of credit as a financial document that stipulates what documents a party needs to provide for payment to occur. The LC also ensures the payment occurs as indicated and through SWIFT. It is a guarantee of payment provided by the bank, that if a party meets the requirements stated in the letter of credit, they will get paid.
- **6. Bank Pre-Advice:** The Pre-Advice document is used by banks to offer advice and as a request to open financial instruments on behalf of customers in this or that bank. It involves two banks, with the recipient bank expected to acknowledge and accept the advice before the asking bank proceeds to facilitate the said financial instrument.



- 7. Cheque: It is a document most used within the banking sector. A written cheque will instruct a bank or other such financial institution to pay the indicated amount of money. The amount is paid from the drawer's account to the person named on the cheque or the bearer. Many people still use cheques in the digital era since they are, Safer to mail, Traceable, Not deposited immediately and thus Make budgeting easier. There are three different types of popular cheques as discussed below:
 - **Bearer Cheque:** A bearer cheque is payable to the person who presents it at the counter. It is an unsafe means of payment since anyone can cash a bearer's check at the counter. A bank does not have a way to verify the details of the person cashing the bearer's cheque.
 - Order Cheque: An order cheque is payable to the person whose name appears on the check, or according to the instructions of the person named on the check. Therefore, the payee can cash it at the counter or the bank can transfer the funds to the payee's bank account.
 - Crossed Cheque: A crossed cheque has two lines drawn on its face, and the payee cannot cash it at the counter. Instead, the bank transfers the check's funds to the payee's bank account. It is the safest check since it allows the bank to do further checks on the payee.
- **8. Bank Guarantee (BG):** Another common document is the Bank Guarantee. Banks use this financial instrument to indicate that the bank is ready to make a full payment once the target party meets certain conditions as set out in a Sale and Purchase Agreement (SPA). Anyone with a BG document can borrow money or access credit against it.
- **9. Bank Note:** This is a banking document that people also call a "bill". It is a negotiable promissory note, that a bank issues, and whose usage is broadly similar to what we call money or legal tender. A banknote is always payable on demand and to the bearer. The financial institution (bank) prints the note's amount payable figure on the note.
- **10. Account Opening Form:** The account opening form is a standard document that a bank gives to a person that wants to open a bank account within the bank's branch. The format and required information of this form vary from one bank to another. Nonetheless, most account opening forms require an individual to provide some specific information, which may include full name, addresses, contact number, next of kin, and more. In recent years, this form exists both physically and electronically. As a result, a potential client can download, print, and submit the form to the closest branch. Some banks allow clients to electronically fill out online forms, which can be submitted to the bank digitally after being filled.

- 11. Withdrawal Slip: Withdrawal slips can be described as the opposite of deposit slips. This piece of document allows a bank account owner to withdraw money from their account. A typical withdrawal slip can be found within the banking hall of a bank's branch. Within this slip, important information is written by the client, which allows the bank personnel to verify the identity of the client. Such information includes account name, signature, account number, withdrawal amount, and more. A withdrawal slip can only be used with a savings account. A checking account requires a cheque for the withdrawal of money.
- 12. Fixed Deposit Receipt: A fixed deposit receipt is a document that contains information about a fixed deposit made by a client to a bank. Such information includes the full name, address, age, deposit amount, duration of the deposit, and interest rate. This type of receipt serves as proof that a client has money fixed within a bank. A fixed deposit receipt is usually given to a client at a branch once the agreement between a client and a bank has been reached. Therefore, it serves as proof of an agreement between parties.
- 13. Demand Draft: This type of document is another important banking document. Basically, a demand draft allows a client to pay for products from a merchant through a third-party bank. A demand draft functions just as an exchange bill or a cheque. But a demand draft is sometimes difficult to cancel. The reason for this difficulty is that demand drafts are made for a particular party by the bank. This characteristic is quite different from a cheque or an exchange bill.
- 14. Demand Draft Request Form: A demand draft request form is a type of requisition document. Just like any other requisition document, it allows for a request. However, it is used as a formal document for requesting items or services. The demand draft request form is an excellent document for accounting and tracking requests made within a business. A typical demand draft request form contains the name of the author of the requisition, request date, requested items, dates, delivery details, fulfillment department, and more. Additionally, a box for appending signatures is allowed given within the form. For large organizations, this type of document is perfect as it allows for smooth banking processes.
- 15. Account Closing Form: An account closing form is a document that allows an account owner to formally request the closure of their account. This form is usually given to the customer upon request. In general, the form provides spaces for an account owner to provide personal information such as full name, account name, account type, and more. Additionally, an individual signs the document for validation. Finally, a user is usually asked to provide a reason for the closure of their account as this information is used to better serve other clients.

- 16. Reference Form: The reference form is sometimes called the account reference form or the referee form. This form is usually given to a client when they are at the point of opening a bank account, especially a checking account. The form is to be completed by several individuals that will give an account of the financial worthiness of an individual and the ability to maintain an account. The referees that complete such forms are required to have an active checking account before they become eligible to act as a reference for others.
- 17. Account Upgrade Form: The account upgrade form is a document that allows a client to provide additional information that will allow a bank to upgrade their account status from one type to another. In most cases, an account upgrade form is used to request more information from an individual. For example, an individual can be asked to provide proof of ownership of a property so that their account can become eligible for accessing a larger amount of overdraft.
- **18. Transfer Request Form:** A transfer request form is of piece document that authorizes a bank to transfer a stipulated amount of money from one account to another. This form is usually given to an account owner at the counter. There they fill in their banking details and provide the banking details for the person to whom the money will be transferred.
- 19. Card Request Form: A card request form is a document that lets an account owner request either a debit or a credit card from their financial institution. This document usually contains fields where basic information is provided by the person that requires a card. After the form is completed, it is usually submitted and a card is issued either instantaneously or shipped to the mailing address of the account owner in a few working days.

Check Your Progress A:

Ι.	What do you understand by passbook?
2.	Differentiate between NRI Account and NRO Account.

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3.	"Compliance is very important and central banks and other global watchdogs provide stringent oversight". Comment.
4.	Differentiate between Credit Cheque and Bearer Cheque.

15.5 ONLINE BANKING

Online Banking is a medium of delivering banking services that facilitates the customer to access their accounts from anywhere in the world and offers them customized services as per their needs in a timely and cost-effective manner. Now almost all the traditional banks have incorporated E-banking services to meet their customers' emerging demands. Customers can perform day-to-day banking transactions, check the market information, make trades, view balances, transfer money, open new accounts and even apply for a range of banking services sitting on their most comfortable locations. Thus, banks in this way provide a convenient and cost-effective collection of services to their customers via the opening of and adoption of online platforms. The evolution of smartphones along with digital technology totally reformulated the payment landscape. Online banking services can majorly be classified into four categories; Internet Banking, Mobile Banking, ATMs, and Debit and Credit Cards. Each of these types are discussed in detail below:

15.5.1 Internet Banking

With the help of internet banking, an individual can move funds from one bank account to another with online bank transfers. Even if the funds are spread across accounts at different institutions, it helps to have an easy way to make transfers between them. Online transfers are a convenient way to transfer money from one bank to another. Internet banking services can further be classified into 3categories;

• **Information Only Services:** These services provide General-purpose information like interest rates, branch, location, etc.

- **Information Transfer Services:** The services provide information which are customers- specific such as account balances, transaction details, etc.
- **Electronic Transactional Services:** These services allow the customers to operate on their accounts for the transfer of funds, payment of different bills, subscribing to other products of the band to transact purchase and sale of securities, etc.

15.5.2 Mobile Banking

Mobile banking is one step closer to creating a completely digitalized environment. It refers to a service provided by a bank or other financial institution, that enables customers to perform a range of financial transactions over mobile. Banks provide mobile banking services to their clients in the different ways listed here:

- Mobile Applications: Mobile banking apps have come a long way. Once upon a time, features like mobile check deposits were considered cutting edge. Now, consumers have come to expect that kind of functionality, along with seamless money transfers, bill pay, ATM locators, and more. Today, some apps will even let you track accounts from different financial institutions. Others offer built-in financial wellness and budgeting platforms. Some turn your mobile device into a digital wallet. If mobile offerings are a deciding factor for you in choosing a bank, we've assembled this list of the best banking apps on the market.
- SMS Banking: Along with mobile apps, most banks offer mobile banking services over SMS. This service is useful for those who do not have smartphones and/or internet connections. Customers need to register their mobile number with their bank to avail of SMS banking. SMS banking offers services such as balance enquiry, mini-statement, block atm card or a credit card, enquiry for forex rate, enquiring about current interest rates etc.
- Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD): USSD is a type of communication via which one can exercise basic banking services. There is no need for a smartphone or an internet connection for this service. It allows services like balance inquiry and transfer of funds. *99# is a USSD based mobile banking service, that has been launched by NPCI which is supported by 51 leading banks in India. It offers various services such as balance inquiry, mini statement, transfer of funds, MMID etc.

15.5.3 Automated Teller Machines (ATM)

ATM is designed to perform the most important function of the bank. It is an electronic banking outlet that allows customers to complete basic transactions



without the aid of a branch representative or teller. It is operated by a plastic card with its special features. The plastic card is replacing cheques, personal attendance of the customer, banking hours restrictions, and paper-based verification.

15.5.4 Debit and Credit Cards

Debit cards are also known as check cards. They offer an alternative to carrying a checkbook or cash. The Credit Cardholder is empowered to spend wherever and whenever he wants with his Credit Card within the limits fixed by his bank. A credit card is a postpaid card. Debit Card, on the other hand, is a prepaid card with some stored value. Every time a person uses this card, the Internet Banking money gets transferred to its account from the bank of the buyer. The buyers' account is debited with the exact amount of purchases.

15.5.5 Mobile Wallet

A mobile wallet is a virtual wallet that stores payment card information on a mobile device. Mobile wallets are a convenient way for a user to make instore payments and can be used at merchants listed with the mobile wallet service provider. It is a technique to hold cash in digital format and can link the credit card or debit card information in mobile device to mobile wallet. One can use mobile wallets to make in-store payments, online purchases, pay for digital content, and accept offers, cash backs and rewards. This type of payment method allocates consumers to make 'tap-and-pay' purchases and use a single wallet for all purchases, including online and offline purchases. Mobile wallets are integrated and intended to let secure, hassle-free and speedy payments for goods and services. A mobile wallet uses a bank account, debit or credit card information to process payments and the payment details are stored in a secure and encoded format. These wallets help lower the payment processing time, lessen fraud and are cost-effective. It is very simple to use a mobile wallet all you need to do is install the app on your smartphone and register for the service.

15.6 TYPES OF PAYMENTS

The major types of payments are cheques, Indian postal orders and online payments are discussed below:

15.6.1 Cheque

Payment cheques are the traditional method for collecting regular and oneoff payments. A payment cheque is a document, written and signed by a customer, instructing a bank or building society to debit your account and pay another person or organization. A payment cheque can take up to 7 working days to clear. Various types of cheques are:

• **Post-Dated Cheque:** A post-dated check (or post-dated cheque) is a check written with a future date. In other words, the date that appears on



the check is after the date when the check was written. Even with a future date appearing on the check, the check could clear (be paid from) the bank account before that date.

- **Pre-Dated Cheque:** A pre-dated check is a check with a date before the date of deposit. Assuming your friend gives you a check on a Friday with the same date and you deposit it at the bank the next Monday. You have deposited a pre-dated check that is four days old. Now, depositing pre-dated checks is fine until they get too old.
- Stale Cheque: When the date written on the cheque is three months prior to submission to the bank for payment, it is called a Stale cheque. As per RBI guidelines, with effect from April 1, 2012, the validity period of the cheque is reduced from 6 months to 3 months, from the date of issue of the instrument.
- **Dishonored Cheque:** A dishonored check is another term for a returned check or a check with non-sufficient funds. Many people also refer to a dishonored check as a bounced check or simply a bad check. Writing a dishonored check can result in fees for the person who wrote the check, and inconvenience both customers and business owners. In India, a bounced check is a criminal offense, punishable by fines and/or jail term, under Section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881.

Cheques may be dishonored by a financial institution because there are insufficient cleared funds in the account to cover the cheque. Other reasons for not honoring a cheque include:

- the account holder instructs the bank not to pay the cheque, called a stopped cheque;
- the account holder's funds are frozen;
- the account does not exist due to a false cheque being presented;
- the date of the cheque is outside the period permitted by law;
- the signature on the cheque is not the same as the signature on the file of the account holder or an authorized signatory on the account; or
- the cheque is damaged.

15.6.2 Indian Postal Order

A postal order, postal note, or money order is a financial instrument usually intended for sending money through the mail. It is purchased at a post office and is payable at another post office to the named recipient. A fee for the service, known as poundage, is paid by the purchaser.

Indian Postal Orders are the means of remitting money from one place to another through the post office. They used to be useful in transferring small amounts like the application fees for the government services. The amount is to be paid at one post office and is paid to the recipient at the destination post office. Indian Postal Orders (IPOs) are still very much in use, particularly in rural areas and transactions in Government offices. The IPOs are basically like Bank Demand Drafts (DDs)-a means to transfer money through Post Offices. The finance ministry has approved the linking of savings bank accounts at post offices with IPPB accounts. This will enable post office account holders to transfer money from their accounts to any bank account.

15.6.3 Online Payments

Online transfers are generally free at online banks and brick and mortar institutions, though some do charge. The various steps about how to transfer money from one bank to another online are discussed below:

- Link the two accounts: Log in to the first bank's website or mobile app and select the option for making transfers. There may be a choice for internal transfers, that is, moving money in between two accounts within the same bank from checking to savings, for example. You want the external option, which lets you move funds out to a different bank.
- **Provide external account information:** Have the second bank's IFSC code and your account number handy. You can usually get this information from a bank statement or printed paper check.
- Confirm the new account: After you enter the required information, the first bank will typically want to verify that you have access to the second bank's account. You might be asked to enter your username and password, which the first bank would then verify. Another way the first bank could verify the account is to make a small deposit or two (think a few pennies each) and ask you to confirm the amounts. This process could take a couple of days to complete.
- **Set up transfers:** Once the account is confirmed, you can set up transfers from the sending bank's website. Choose the sending and receiving accounts, and enter the amount to be transferred and the date for the transaction to occur. From there, you can usually see which date the funds are expected to be available in the receiving account. You will also want to choose whether you want to make a one-time transaction or a recurring transfer (once a week, for example). After you have made your choices, select the option to submit them.

Check Your Progress B:

1.	Write a short note on electronic transactional services offered by internet banking.

2.	"The evolution of smartphones along with digital technology totally reformulated the payment landscape". Comment.
3.	What is USSD?
4.	Differentiate between pre-dated and post-dated cheques.

15.8 LET US SUM UP

Banks are the backbone for the smooth functioning of any economy. And plays a central role in facilitating economic activity through three interrelated processes namely financial intermediation, asset transformation, and money creation. Banks provide three core banking services: deposit collection, payment arrangement, and loan underwriting. An individual can open different kinds of bank accounts depending upon their needs and requirements set by the bank. Initially, there were only four types of bank accounts that were operating in India. These included the Current Account, Savings Account, Recurring Deposit Account, Fixed Deposit Account, Demat Account, NRI Account, etc.

A passbook is a bank document given to all bank account holders by the bank which lists the various transactions that have been made into(credited) and out of (debited) that account. It becomes mandatory to record transactions when the account holder starts initiating the transactions. And, Cheque books are provided to all current and savings account holders. Defaulting on a cheque is punishable by law. A cheque book is a folder or small book containing preprinted paper instruments issued to checking account holders and used to pay for goods or services.

Banks are one of the most regulated financial institutions around the world. The banking sector needs to ensure that all its customers comply with regulatory requirements. Compliance is very important and central banks and other global watchdogs provide stringent oversight. Thus, there are many forms used by banks to provide their services. Some of the most commonly

used documents in banking are deposit slips, debit cards, bank statements, loan agreement forms, letters of credit (loc), fixed deposit receipts, demand drafts, account closing forms, transfer request forms, and request forms, etc.

Online Banking is a medium of delivering banking services that facilitates the customer to access their accounts from anywhere in the world. Online banking services can majorly be classified into four categories; Internet Banking, Mobile Banking, ATMs, and Debit and Credit Cards. With the help of internet banking, an individual can move funds from one bank account to another with online bank transfers. Mobile banking refers to a service provided by a bank or other financial institution, that enables customers to perform a range of financial transactions over mobile. ATM is an electronic banking outlet that allows customers to complete basic transactions without the aid of a branch representative or teller. Debit cards are also known as check cards. They offer an alternative to carrying a checkbook or cash. The Credit Cardholder is empowered to spend wherever and whenever he wants with his Credit Card within the limits fixed by his bank. A credit card is a postpaid card.

The major types of payments are cheques, Indian postal orders, and online payments. Payment cheques are the traditional method for collecting regular and one-off payments. A payment cheque is a document, written and signed by a customer, instructing a bank or building society to debit your account and pay another person or organization. A postal order, postal note, or money order is a financial instrument usually intended for sending money through the mail. It is purchased at a post office and is payable at another post office to the named recipient. The various steps about how to transfer money from one bank to another online are linking the two accounts, providing external account information, confirming the new accounts, and setting up transfers.

15.9 KEYWORDS

Cheque: A payment cheque is a document, written and signed by a customer, instructing a bank or building society to debit your account and pay another person or organization.

Current Account: Current bank account is opened by businessmen who have a higher number of regular transactions with the bank. It includes deposits, withdrawals, and contra transactions. It is also known as Demand Deposit Account.

Demat Account: A Demat account (short for "dematerialized account") is a necessary account to hold financial securities (equity or debt) in a digital form and to trade in the share market.

Fixed Deposit Account: Fixed deposit account gives you a fixed rate of interest on your money for a defined period. That means you will always know exactly what returns you will receive, regardless of any changes in interest rates.



Mobile Banking: Mobile banking refers to a service provided by a bank or other financial institution, that enables customers to perform a range of financial transactions over mobile

NRI Account: An NRI Account refers to the accounts opened by a Non-Resident Indian (NRI) or a Person of Indian Origin (PIO) with a bank or financial institution which is authorized by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), to provide various services.

Online Banking: Online banking is a medium of delivering banking services that facilitates the customer to access their accounts from anywhere in the world and offers them customized services as per their needs in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Passbook: A passbook is a bank document given to all bank account holders by the bank which lists the various transactions that have been made into(credited) and out of (debited) that account.

Recurring Deposit Account: A recurring deposit account enables an individual to deposit fixed amount every month for a pre-defined period which earns interest similar to Fixed Deposits (FD).

Savings Account: A savings account is an interest-bearing deposit account held at a bank or other financial institution.

Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD): USSD is a type of communication via which one can exercise basic banking services.

15.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1. Describe the different types of accounts and their features.
- 2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using pass-books and checks?
- 3. Do you think forms will lose their relevance in the coming time? Why or why not?
- 4. What are the steps for doing online payments?
- 5. What are the different types of Online banking? Differentiate between internet banking and mobile banking
- 6. State the different types of Cheques?

Note: These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.

BLOCK 6 BUDGET, AUDIT AND SECRETARIAL PRACTICE

BLOCK 6 BUDGET, AUDIT AND SECRETARIAL PRACTICE

This is the sixth and last block of the course "Office Management and Secretarial Practices". This block will familiarize you with various budget, audit and secretarial practices. The block on the theme "Budget, Audit & Secretarial Practice" comprises of six units, the detail of which is mentioned below:

Unit 16: Provides brief about budget. It explains the budget, its structure, its salient features, its advantages, its disadvantages and various types of budget including annual, revised and estimated budget. It discusses budget on the basis of time, flexibility and functions. The later part of the unit explains the steps in preparation of the budget and also the heads of expenditure.

Unit 17: Makes the learners aware about audit, its importance and types of audit. An audit is crucial because it provides legitimacy to financial statements. The unit also emphasizes on providing an overview of vouching, its importance and its principles. It also discusses Verification of Assets and liabilities, its objectives and importance. It provides a difference between vouching and verification. It explains stock register and assets register.

Unit 18: States the definition of secretary, importance of a secretary and secretarial work. It describes the roles and duties of a secretary and discusses the qualifications of a secretary. It also provides the definition of private secretary and explains the qualification and duties of a private secretary.

Unit 19: Makes the readers learn about the status, role and functions of secretaries of different types of organizations such as an association or a club, a co-operative society, a local body and a government department.

Unit 20: Define a meeting and classify meetings. It states the requisites of a valid meeting and enumerates the rules governing the meeting. It describes the preparation for, and conduct of meetings. It explains the importance of notice, agenda and quorum & the role of the chairman of a meeting specifying his powers and duties. It also describes the role of a secretary in the preparation for meetings.

Unit 21: Discusses the general principles of meetings relating to debate and discussion, order of business, motions, amendments, resolutions, voting procedures and methods to ascertain the sense of meetings, privilege in speech, minutes and proceedings, their drafting, circulation and confirmation, and secretary's duties in connection with meetings.

UNIT 16 BUDGET

Structure

- 16.0 Objectives
- 16.1 Introduction
- 16.2 Budget
 - 16.2.1 Annual Budget
 - 16.2.2 Revised Budget
 - 16.2.3 Estimated Budget
 - 16.2.4 Structure of Budget
 - 16.2.5 Purpose of Budget
 - 16.2.6 Salient Features of Budget
- 16.3 Types of Budgets
- 16.4 Advantages of Budget
- 16.5 Limitations of Budget
- 16.6 Process of Preparing the Budget
- 16.7 Heads of Expenditure
 - 16.7.1 Recurring Expenditure
 - 16.7.2 Non Recurring Expenditure
- 16.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 16.9 Key words
- 16.10 Terminal Questions

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16.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to;

- know the structure and various types of budget;
- understand the salient features of budget;
- understand the purpose of budget;
- understand the advantages and limitation of budget; and
- know the process for preparation of the budget.

16.1 INTRODUCTION

The objectives/purposes of every type of business entity are achieved by well coordinating and controlling their different activities, which in a way requires efficient planning for the execution. Efficient planning is always a task of efficient management, which requires the synchronisation of various activities within an organization for the preparation of future plans and actions. These comprehensive

Budget, Audit and Secretarial Practice plans are usually referred to as "Budget". Budgeting basically is a management device for short term planning and control. Whereas, budgeting control refers to a financial jargon for managing income and expenditure, which calls for comparing the actual and expected income or expenditures to identify whether the corrective actions are required or not.

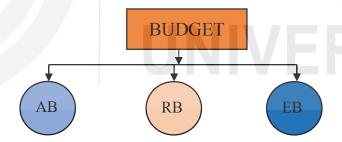
16.2 BUDGET

Just like individuals manage their monthly expenses and income, similarly businesses keep a track of their future revenues and expenses for a particular period. This estimation of revenues and expenses over a specified future period of time is known as Budget.

According to the Institute of Costs and Works Accountant, England "A Budget is a financial and qualitative statement prior to a defined period of time, of a policy to be pursued for that period to attain the given objectives".

In a word of Keller & Ferrara, "A budget is a plan of action to achieve stated objectives based on a predetermined series of related assumptions."

Budget is required for forecasting the financial result or financial position of the business for some future period. Businesses use budget to plan and measure the purpose. Budget primarily is used to forecast the financial position of a company for the future period. It is used for planning and performance measurement purposes, which can involve spending for fixed assets, rolling out new products, training employees, setting up bonus plans, controlling operations, and so forth.



16.2.1 Annual Budget

Annual budget refers to the plan for a company expenditure for a financial year. It aids the company in tracking its financial health. It not only helps in setting the priorities and goals but also in making the long term commitments towards other parties.

While preparing the annual budget, the interest of all the departments should be considered. Their feedback and insights should be taken into consideration so that they actively take part in achieving the projected goals set by the annual budget. Budget preparation must always begin early so that all the preparations can be made on time and new employees can be hired for the company if need arises.

Annual budgets must always be realistic or achievable. Revenues must not be projected too high and expenses too low. Companies should always have a conservative approach in mind and should always leave some slack in the projections.

16.2.2 Revised Budget

When major or significant changes are made in respect of receipts or payments in the case when no provisions were available or provisions were inadequate in the budget of the current year that budget is known as revised budget.

Basically there are three main reasons for the preparation of revised budgets:

- a) Changes in the external factors which are outside the control of the firm. There can be change in the price of labour, change in the price of raw materials, some climatic changes or others.
- b) If there are some errors in the existing budget and which are detected later on. These errors need to be rectified.
- c) For meeting the additional expenditures for the uncertain and unforeseen contingencies.

The preparation of a revised budget is similar to a normal budget. After being prepared, it is explored and coordinated with the other functional budgets and at last approved by the Budget Committee.

16.2.3 Estimated Budget

The estimated budget approximates the time and resources needed to plan and complete a project and develop and implement a viable budget. Most common types of budget estimates are discussed below:

- 1. Revenue Estimate: Revenue estimate is the amount that a company can presumably spend on a project. This value is a derivative of the company's annual earnings and is independent of any money borrowed and assets owned.
- **2. Cost Estimate:** A cost estimate includes the capital requirement for the completion of a project, which essentially includes labor costs, material and equipment costs, management costs, etc.
- **3. Return Estimate:** Return estimate is calculated by subtracting the estimated cost from the revenue estimate. It helps management in choosing the projects with higher potential returns.
- **4. Risk Estimate:** Risk estimate enables the forecast of the likelihood of risks and expected consequences in the project. This allows the companies to be financially prepared and to disqualify high-risk projects.
- **5.** Cash flow estimate: Cash flow estimate is the approximate amount of money going into and out of a project, based on cost and revenue

Budget, Audit and Secretarial Practice estimates. It confirms whether the firm's funding and budget are sufficient for the project at hand or not.

16.2.4 Structure of Budget

A budget may vary from one level to another. A basic budget can have a future estimation of income statement whereas a complex budget can have comprehensive items such as sales forecast, expenditures for that forecasted sales, predictions of the working capital, etc. Budget should always be developed in a top-down approach. A master budget consists of the summary of the entire budget document. It aggregates all the lower-level budgets produced by a company's various functional areas. It also includes the financial planning, cash flow forecast and budgeted profit and loss account and balance sheet of the organization.

16.2.5 Purpose of Budget

The management of any organisation is mostly interested in realising the company's objectives. For this, it tries to optimize the resources of the firm and eliminate the waste. Budgetary control helps the management in controlling business activities in the desired direction. The various purposes that budgets serves are following:

- 1. Helps in setting Company's objectives
- **2.** Helps in allocating resources
- **3.** Ensures planning for future actions to be taken
- 4. Helps in operating various cost centres optimally and economically
- 5. Works as tool for decision making
- **6.** Helps in monitoring the business performance
- 7. Provides the set of standards for performance evaluation and corrective measures in case of deviations
- **8.** Enhances the financial controls and monitoring; and
- **9.** Provides means of communication.

16.2.6 Salient Features of Budget

Salient features of budget are following:

- 1. **Written document:** A budget is always a written document which is prepared by the business and reviewed and approved by the appropriate higher authority.
- 2. **Continuous process:** Whenever there are changes or modifications in the circumstances, there is need for changes in the budget. They can be updated, revised, or controlled whenever need occurs. So, it is a continuous process.
- 3. **Monetary terms:** It is always expressed in monetary terms. Not necessarily always in terms of rupee or dollars but can also be expressed

in something having money worth such as number of units sold, number of units manufactured and others.

- 4. **Time and purpose basis:** Businesses prepare budgets for each purpose as well as for a particular period. Period can be a year, a month, quarter, etc. Also they are designed on the basis of trends and past experiences.
- 5. **Financial barometer:** Actual performance of the enterprise is compared with the budgeted performance. And then the variations between the two are analysed and reasons for the same is detected. It helps in predicting the financial position of the firm.
- 6. **Forward planning:** It is forward planning because in budgeting targets are set for the future and actual performance of the organisation is compared with them. It acts as a vital tool for managerial control.

16.3 TYPES OF BUDGETS

The large-scale business prepares different three major types of budgets to almost cover all their activities where control is desired. The major classification of budget is following:

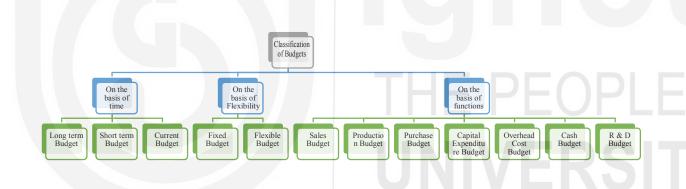


Figure 16.1: Classification of Budgets

- a) On the basis of Time: Long term Budget, Short term Budget, Current Budget
- b) On the basis of flexibility: Fixed budget or flexible Budget
- c) On the basis of functions: Sales Budget, Production Budget, Purchase Budget, Capital Expenditure Budget, Overhead Cost Budget, Cash Budget, Research and Development Budget

A brief discussion about all the major types of budgets is given below:

a) ON THE BASIS OF TIME:

1. Long Term Budget: Long term budgets are prepared by the management for a long-term ranging for a period from 5-10 years or more.

- **2. Short Term Budget:** Short term budgets are prepared for a short period of time ranging over 1 to 2 years usually.
- **3.** Current Budget: Current budgets refers to the budgets prepared for the current period within a short period of 1 year.

b) ON THE BASIS OF THE FLEXIBILITY:

- 1. Fixed Budget: In a fixed budget the targets for a particular level of activity is specified with a rigidity. Targets once specified cannot be changed or revised over the budget period, even if the actual level of activity obtained comes out to be very different than the budgeted one. Fixed budgets are preferred for short term periods only and must be made with utmost accuracy.
- **2. Flexible Budget:** Flexible budget also known as the variable budget allows the change in accordance with the changes in the level of activity. Flexible budgets are usually preferred before an accounting period to predict the worse case scenario for the upcoming period. This provides the "what if" option for the future financial performance.

c) ON THE BASIS OF FUNCTIONS:

- 1. Sales Budget: Sales budget determines the quantity of anticipated sales and expected selling price per unit.
- **2. Production Budget:** Production budget is prepared in the unit of output and indicates the production for a specified period of time.
- **3. Purchase Budget:** Purchase budget is prepared keeping in mind the production schedule and inventory required for the upcoming period. It involved deciding about the quantity and value of different items to be bought at different points of time.
- **4.** Capital Expenditure Budget: Capital expenditure budget requires utmost attention and care as it involves a large amount of expenditure. It represents the planned outlay on fixed assets over a period of time.
- 5. Overhead Cost Budget: This budget presents all the expected costs dealing with the manufacturing of goods that are expected to be incurred by the company in the next year. Direct material cost and direct labor costs are not involved in this budget as they become a component of Cost Of Goods Sold in the master budget.
- **6.** Cash Budget: Cash budgets by taking into account all the receipts and payments of the business highlights the cash requirements over a period of time.
- 7. **Research and Development Budget:** Research and development budget plays an important role in growth of any business. It refers to deciding about the amount to be spent on research and development activities over a period of time.

16.4 ADVANTAGES OF BUDGET

The various advantages of having an appropriate budget are following:

- 1. **Maximization of Profits:** Having proper budgetary controls maximize the profits for an entity. This on the forefront requires a proper planning and coordination of different functions as well as a good control over capital and revenue expenditures.
- **2.** Coordination: In any organization the working of different departments and sectors is coordinated. The budgets of different departments have a bearing on one another. Therefore, having budgetary controls leads to the coordination of various executives and subordinates. It leads to a centralized control on many decentralized activities. It encourages teamwork and mutual support.
- 3. Well Defined Aims: The goals and plans & policies for achieving those goals are clearly defined by the top management. Targets are set for each department and efforts are directed for achieving them. In the absence of pre-defined objectives, efforts will be wasted in pursuing divergent aims.
- 4. Tool of Performance Measurement: In the budgetary control system, the budgeted targets are compared to the actual results and in the end variances or deviations are found and reasons for the same are determined. Thereby this system acts as a tool for measuring performance by providing targets to all the departments and organisation as whole
- 5. Reduces Cost: It leads to reduction in the costs as all the expenditures are well planned and systematic by which ultimately all the wasteful expenses are eliminated. Businesses try to reduce the cost of production and increase the sale for the combinations of products that yield highest profitability to the organisation.
- **6. Determining Weaknesses:** Budget helps in comparing the actual outcome with the expected outcomes. Deviation in the actual and expected performance will enable the determination of weakness and fallacies. This in a way helps in concentrating the efforts on those aspects having less than the required attention.
- 7. Corrective Action: Budgetary controls enable the management to take corrective measures where the discrepancy in the performance exists. The deviation in the performance can regularly be reported to take corrective actions at earliest, which in the absence of a budgetary control system could only be recognised at the end of the financial period.
- **8.** Consciousness: Having proper budgetary control creates a budget consciousness among the employees. By fixing the targets for employees, everybody is aware of their rights and responsibilities and

Budget, Audit and Secretarial Practice knows what is expected from him/her and can continue his/her work uninterruptedly.

Check Your Progress A:

1.	What is the need for a budget in any organization?
2.	What is a Flexible Budget?
3.	"Budget leads to a centralized control on many decentralized activities".
<i>J</i> .	Comment.
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4.	Differentiate between Sales Budget and Purchase Budget.
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16.5 LIMITATIONS OF BUDGET

Despite various advantages, there are few limitations as well. Some of them are discussed below:

- 1. **Expensive:** The implementation of budgetary control system is quite costly as it requires specialised staff and includes various expenditures. It is very difficult for small firms to pay a heavy price for the process.
- 2. Uncertain Future: As discussed, budgets are prepared for future periods and it is very difficult to predict the future accurately especially during times of uncertainties. Even if the best predictions are made, then also they may not always come true as they are made on the basis of few assumptions.

- 3. Creates Conflicts: Inter departmental conflicts are very common in the budgetary system. It is because of the reason that every department in the organisation tries to get maximum allocation of funds and every department tries to achieve their individual departmental goals whilst neglecting the overall goal of the business. The success of the system depends upon the coordination among different departments. Also, in the case of achieving the budgeted targets, every department tries to take credit for the same.
- **4. Rigidity:** Budgets bring rigidity in the operations and functioning of the organisations. But in actual practice, firms are exposed to various uncertain environmental factors. Therefore, the budgets should be designed flexible enough for incorporating the changes. But frequent revisions or changes may involve huge expenditure and reduce the value of the budgets.
- 5. Depends Upon the Top management: Simply the development of budget does not ensure its proper implementation. The management of the firm should be supportive and enthusiastic for the proper implementation of the system. The budgetary system often tends to collapse if there is lack of support from the management. Also, budgeting is only an instrument of the management and it can never substitute the management itself.

16.6 PROCESS OF PREPARING THE BUDGET

Budget preparation is a critical process for any business in several ways. It involves following steps:

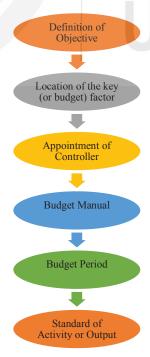


Figure 16.2: Process of Preparing Budget

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- 1. **Definition of Objective:** The first step in the preparation of budgets is defining the objectives. The objectives should be written well and defined precisely stating the areas of control and items of revenue and expenditures over a period of time.
- **2.** Location of the key (or budget) factor: Key factor is the factor which sets a limit to the total activity. It can be the non availability of power, money, certain raw materials or even lack of demand. This key factor needs to be located and estimated properly.
- **3. Appointment of Controller:** After defining the objectives and deciding about the key factors, a senior executive must be assisted to obtain his expertise for the smooth functioning. The controller must be responsible for coordination and development of budget programs and the preparation of the budget manual.
- **4. Budget Manual:** After the appointment of the controller, the next step is to prepare a budget manual. Budget manual is basically a collection of documents containing key information involved in the planning process.
- **5. Budget Period:** After deciding about the budget manual, the budget period needs to be decided by the Budget Committee. The period covered by the budget is known as the budget period. The length of the budget period is decided by the Budget Committee suiting the business purpose.
- **6. Standard of Activity or Output:** Past statistics should be studied and applied only when there is likelihood of similar conditions as that of the past in the future also. While setting budgets for a progressive business, the achievement of a year must exceed that from earlier years.

16.7 HEADS OF EXPENDITURE

Expenditures are the costs that are incurred by any business during its daily operations. They can be recurring and non-recurring. It is important to understand the difference between two as they both have their own impact on the overall financial health of the company.

16.7.1 Recurring Expenditure

Recurring expenditure is the operating cost of the firm. They include all those expenses which are incurred on a regular basis and are a part of ongoing business operations of the company. For ensuring continuous business operations, they are often incurred on a periodic basis.

Examples include rent of office or factory, electricity expenses, depreciation, maintenance charges, salaries, insurance cost, and others. These expenses are normally pre-determined and fairly predictable in nature. They are recorded either in trading or Profit and loss account of the company.

16.7.2 Non Recurring Expenditure

Non recurring expenditure occurs because of extraordinary events. They do not arise out of routine or day to day operations of the business. They are not repetitive in nature.

Examples of non recurring expenditure include purchase of new machinery, mergers or acquisitions made by companies, purchase of real estate, large scale facility upgrades and others. Few of the major reasons for the occurrence of non recurring expenses include changes in accounting principles, shutting down or starting up a department or a certain operation or some extraordinary events.

Table 16.1: Difference between Recurring and Non recurring expenditure

	Recurring Expenditure	Non Recurring Expenditure
Meaning	They include all those expenses which are incurred on a regular basis and are a part of ongoing business operations of the company.	They do not occur frequently and occur due to extraordinary or one-off circumstances.
Frequency	Frequently on periodic basis	Often incur only once
Revenue or Capital nature	Generally revenue in nature and their benefit arises within a single business cycle or accounting period	Generally capital in nature and their benefit is capitalise in more than a single accounting period
Causes	They are incurred to facilitate day to day business operations of the company	They are incurred because of extraordinary events faced by the company
Controllable	Controllable and predictable in nature	Unpredictable in nature
Examples	Rent of office or factory, Electricity expenses, depreciation, maintenance charges, salaries, insurance cost, and others.	Purchase of new machinery, mergers or acquisitions made by companies, purchase of real estate, large scale facility upgrades and others.

Check Your Progress B:

1.	"Budgets bring rigidity in the operations and functioning of the organisations". Comment.

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2.	What do you understand by Budget Manual?
3.	Give a few examples of recurring expenditures.
4.	What is the Budget Period?

16.8 LET US SUM UP

The objectives/purposes of every type of business entity are achieved by well coordinating and controlling their different activities, which in a way requires efficient planning for the execution. Efficient planning is always a task of efficient management, which requires the synchronization of various activities within an organization for the preparation of future plans and actions.

Just like individuals manage their monthly expenses and income, similarly, businesses keep a track of their future revenues and expenses for a particular period. This estimation of revenues and expenses over a specified future period of time is known as a Budget. The annual budget refers to the plan for a company's expenditure for a financial year. When major or significant changes are made in respect of receipts or payments in the case when no provisions were available or provisions were inadequate in the budget of the current year that budget is known as a revised budget.

A budget may vary from one level to another. A basic budget can have a future estimation of income statement whereas a complex budget can have comprehensive items such as sales forecast, expenditures for that forecasted sales, predictions of the working capital, etc. The budget should always be

developed with a top-down approach. A master budget consists of a summary of the entire budget document.

The management of any organization is most interested in realizing the company's objectives. For this, it tries to optimize the resources of the firm and eliminate waste. Budgetary control helps the management in controlling business activities in the desired direction. The various features of a budget are, it is a written document, monetary terms, made on a time and purpose basis, a financial barometer, planning etc.

The large-scale business prepares different three major types of budgets to almost cover all their activities where control is desired which are On the basis of Time such as Long term Budget, Short term Budget, Current Budget; On basis of flexibility such as a Fixed budget or flexible Budget; On the basis of functions such as Sales Budget, Production Budget, Purchase Budget, Capital Expenditure Budget, Overhead Cost Budget, Cash Budget, Research, and Development Budget.

The various advantages of having an appropriate budget are, maximization of profits, coordination, well-defined aims, a tool of performance measurement, reduced cost, determining weaknesses, corrective action, consciousness, etc. The various limitations of the budget are: expensive, uncertain future, Creating conflicts, rigidity, depending upon the top management, etc. The process of budget preparation involves the following steps: definition of objectives, Location of the key (or budget) factor, Appointment of Controller, Budget Manual, Budget Period, and Standard of Activity or Output.

Expenditures are the costs that are incurred by any business during its daily operations. They can be recurring and non-recurring. Recurring expenditure is the operating cost of the firm. They include all those expenses which are incurred regularly and are a part of the ongoing business operations of the company. For ensuring continuous business operations, they are often incurred periodically. Whereas, Non-recurring expenditure occurs because of extraordinary events. They do not arise out of routine or day-to-day operations of the business. They are not repetitive.

16.9 KEY WORDS

Budget: The estimation of revenues and expenses over a specified future period of time is known as Budget.

Budget Committee: A budget committee is a group of people within an organization that creates and maintains fiscal responsibility for that entity.

Budgetary Control: Budgetary control means regularly comparing actual and expected income or expenditure to identify whether or not corrective action is required.

Budget Manual: Budget manual is basically a collection of documents

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containing key information involved in the planning process.

Budget Period: The period covered by the budget is known as the budget period.

Current Budget: Current budgets refers to the budgets prepared for the current period within a short period of 1 year.

Long Term Budget: Long term budgets are prepared by the management for a long-term ranging for a period from 5-10 years or more.

Short Term Budget: Short term budgets are prepared for a short period of time ranging over 1 to 2 years usually.

16.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1. Why is the budget referred to as the financial barometer of the firm?
- 2. What do you understand by budget? State the various features of the budget.
- 3. Explain the various types of budgets?
- 4. List the various advantages and limitations of budgets.
- 5. "Budget is used for planning and performance measurement purposes". Comment.
- 6. List the various steps involved in preparation of budgets.
- 7. How is Fixed Budget different from Flexible Budget?
- 8. List the differences between recurring and non recurring expenditure.

Note: These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.



UNIT 17 AUDIT PROCESS

Structure

- 17.0 Objectives
- 17.1 Introduction
- 17.2 Audit
- 17.3 Importance of Audit
- 17.4 Types of Audits
- 17.5 Vouching
 - 17.5.1 Importance of vouching
 - 17.5.2 Principles of vouching
- 17.6 Verification of Assets and liabilities
 - 17.6.1 Objectives of Verification
 - 17.6.2 Importance of Verification
- 17.7 Difference between Vouching and Verification
- 17.8 Consumable/Stock register
- 17.9 Asset Register
- 17.10 Let Us Sum Up
- 17.11 Keywords
- 17.12 Terminal Questions

17.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- understand the meaning and importance of audit;
- understand the types of audit;
- understand the concept of vouchers and vouching;
- know about the verification of assets and liabilities;
- differentiate between vouching and verification; and
- know about stock register and assets register.

17.1 INTRODUCTION

Accounting and audit both play critical roles in the financial record keeping process of every firm, however their focus differs. While accounting refers to a much broader profession that includes everything from organisation to managing the flow of money through the firm, auditing is a more specific function. Auditing is a component of the accounting profession. It is an independently conducted assessment of accounting and financial records.

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This is done to evaluate whether the corporation or business venture has followed the laws and widely accepted accounting rules in its operations. Whether one owns a tiny business or a large corporation, keeping track of all the financial transactions may be a difficult effort.

17.2 AUDIT

The term Audit is derived from a Latin word "audire" meaning "to hear". So, auditing basically refers to the independent examination of the financial statements of a firm in order to express an opinion whether the financial statements are prepared in accordance or compliance with an identified reporting framework. It is an official inspection based on the Companies Act of 2013 and should be conducted every year in every company. It basically is the examination of various books of the accounts as presented in the annual report by someone independent of the organization. The financial records of the company include various accounts such as a balance sheet, an income statement, a statement of changes in equity, a cash flow statement, and notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes, etc. The notion behind audit is to check and verify the accounts by an independent authority to ensure that all books of accounts are done in a fair manner, profits and losses are accurately assessed, details of assets and liabilities are properly stated, and there is no misrepresentation or fraud that is being conducted. While undertaking an audit, the auditing standard decided by a government body must be followed by the auditor. After completing the audit, auditors must write an audit report, explaining what they have done and giving an opinion drawn from their work.

17.3 IMPORTANCE OF AUDIT

An audit is crucial because it provides legitimacy to financial statements and gives confidence to the shareholders that the accounts are appropriate and fair. It can also aid in the improvement of an organization's internal controls and procedures. The significance of the audit is explained below in a detailed manner:

- 1. **Credibility of financial statements:** Any organization has various stakeholders in its financial statement, all of them cannot be competent enough to thoroughly analyze a company's financial performance. Auditors are independent of anybody's influence; their opinions create trust among the various stakeholders of the organization and give the shareholders confidence that the accounts are true and fair.
- 2. **Fraud prevention and detection:** Audit plays a critical role in the detection and prevention of fraud-based activities. Timely analysis of the company's operation helps in maintaining a stringent internal control system. A company having a functioning and thorough audit system and internal control in place may prevent employees or vendors from

attempting activities to defraud the company.

- 3. **Assess the risk of misstatement**: An audit helps in reducing the scope of misstatements in the company's records and reports. Without an audit system or internal controls, a company will not be able to create reliable financial reports for external or internal purposes. An audit helps in identifying the most important and profitable products or segments requiring management attention.
- **4. Cost of capital:** Strong audit processes may help firms avoid or eliminate a variety of risks, including the risk of substantial misrepresentation in financial reports. It also helps to limit the risk of assets being misappropriated. It also reduces the risk of underperforming management as a result of a lack of information about the company's activities.
- 5. Enables the pursuit of business objectives: An effective audit system helps in the proper implementation of internal control and thus, enables the company to achieve its various objectives. It also facilitates the supervision and monitoring of irregular transactions and thus increases the operational productivity of the business. Auditors review the designs of informally proposed improvements and internal controls.

17.4 TYPES OF AUDITS

Audits in India are classified into two main types, as discussed below:

- **Statutory Audit:** Statutory audits are performed to report to the government and shareholders on the current state of a company's finances and accounts. These audits are carried out by qualified auditors who act as external and independent parties. A statutory audit report is prepared in the format specified by the government agency.
- **Internal Audit:** Internal audits are performed at the request of internal management to examine the financial health of a firm and assess its operational effectiveness. These audits can be carried out either by a third party or by the company's employees.

Every company whose shares are listed on the Indian stock exchange is required to have an internal auditing system in place. A company whose shares are not publicly traded but whose average turnover over the previous three years exceeds INR50 million, or whose share capital and reserves at the start of the fiscal year exceed INR5 million, must also have an internal auditing system in place. In addition, the statutory auditor of the company must report on the company's internal auditing system in the final report.

17.5 **VOUCHING**

Budget, Audit & Secretarial Practice voucher is basically a documentary proof that authenticates any transactions. It proves that the entries made in the books of accounts are actual and genuine. Vouchers can be sales invoices, purchase invoices, bank statements, minutes book, cash memos, bills, bank paying slip, purchase requisition slip, receipts, salaries and wage sheets, gatekeeper's note, bank passbook, memorandum and articles of association, etc.

Vouching is the process of analyzing business enterprise vouchers. According to Ronald A. Irish, "Vouching is a technical term, which refers to the inspection of documentary evidence supporting and substantiating a transaction." It is basically a step in auditing that is taken to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the transactions recorded in the company's books of accounts.

The company's transactions are thoroughly verified with documentary evidence and authority during this process, which serves as the foundation for recording the transactions in the books of account. Further, it also validates that the amount stated in the voucher is accurately entered in the relevant account, which indicates the nature of the respective transaction when it is included in the financial statements.

17.5.1 Importance of Vouching

Vouching is critical for an Auditor for the following reasons:

- 1. Vouching is the backbone of auditing: The primary goal of auditing is to detect errors and frauds in order to prove the truth and fairness of the results presented by the income statement and balance sheet. Vouching is simply a method of detecting errors and deliberate frauds. As a result, it is the foundation of auditing.
- 2. Vouching is the essence of auditing: Auditing not only verifies the accuracy of books of accounts but also whether or not the transactions are related to business. All transactions are performed with or without the prior approval of the relevant authority, and transactions are real or fictitious because an accountant may include fictitious transactions to commit fraud. All of these facts are discoverable through the use of vouching. As a result, vouching is required for auditing.
- 3. Vouching is important to see whether evidence is correct or not: An auditor examines the books of accounts to detect errors and fraud. Presenting duplicate vouchers may be used to commit fraud. With the help of vouching, all types of fraud, both small and large, can be detected. As a result, all evidentiary documents and records must be carefully and thoroughly examined by an auditor as part of the scope of vouching.

17.5.2 Principles of Vouching

The auditor should keep the following important things in mind at the time of

Vouching:

- 1. Arranged vouchers: First and foremost, the auditor should ensure that all of the vouchers provided by the client are properly arranged. And whether they are listed in the same order as the entries in the books or not.
- **2.** Checking of date: The auditor should compare the date on the voucher to the date in the cash book.
- 3. Compare the words and figures: The auditor should ensure that the amount written is consecutively numbered. All vouchers must be properly filed. He should also check whether the figures and words on the youchers are the same or not
- **4. Verification of authority:** The auditor should ensure that all vouchers are signed by the authorized officer. If the voucher is passed by an unauthorized person, it will be invalid.
- **5. Cutting or change:** Any cuts or changes to the receipts and voucher figures must be signed by the authorized officer. By inquiring about it, the auditor can satisfy himself.
- **6.** The transaction must relate to business: The auditor must carefully examine the entries to ensure whether they are related to the business or not
- 7. **Case Of personal vouchers:** The auditor should not accept a voucher in the auditor's personal name. There is a possibility that a company officer purchased an item in his personal capacity.
- **8.** Checking of account head: The head of account on which cash is deposited and drawn must satisfy the auditor. In this regard, he should look over the documentary evidence.
- **9. Revenue stamp:** The auditor should also check to whether the voucher has the required revenue stamp or not.
- **10.** Case of cancelled voucher: The cancelled voucher should not be accepted by the auditor. Because it has already served its payment purpose. If it is accepted, there is a risk of double payment.
- **11. Important notes:** The auditor should make some important notes about the items that require additional evidence or explanation.
- **12. Payment:** The auditor should determine whether payment is described partially or completely for the sale transaction.
- **13. Agreements:** Agreements provide with basic information to the auditors. He should go over the agreements, correspondence, and other pertinent documents.
- **14. Printer vouchers:** Printer vouchers are legitimate and legally acceptable. These are useless if they are not printed.

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15. List of missing vouchers: The auditor should compile a list of missing vouchers. This list will aid in the detection of fraud and errors.

Check Your Progress A

1.	How does Audit help in the prevention of fraud?
2.	What is a Statutory Audit?
3.	What is a Voucher?
4.	"An effective audit system helps in the proper implementation of internal control". Comment.

17.6 VERIFICATION OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

Verification is the auditing process of proving the truth by which the auditors confirm with themselves the actual existence of assets and liabilities available in the financial statements of the firm. It not only includes the verification of the existence of assets and liabilities but also about the legal ownership and possession of assets, their exact valuation, and ascertaining that the asset is unencumbered by any debt.

There are two types of verification; offsite verification and onsite verification. Offsite verification includes verifying paperwork, official

records, and images, as well as interrogating workers who are responsible or otherwise regarded to be a reputable source of information for the institution. On the other hand, onsite verification entails the verifying party personally visiting the facility and learning all of the pertinent information on the premises where it is located and operated. In certain nations, the procedure may be governed by legislation.

17.6.1 Objectives of Verification

Objectives of verification are discussed below:

- **1. Existence:** To verify that the assets and liabilities on the balance sheet exist.
- **2. Ownership:** To confirm asset ownership by inspecting the title paperwork.
- **3. Possession:** To determine if assets are in the client's possession.
- **4. Purpose and Authorisation:** To guarantee that assets were purchased or obligations were incurred for the intended purpose and with sufficient authority.
- **5.** Lien of Charge: To verify that assets are free of any charge and, if a charge exists, that it is adequately disclosed.
- **6. Completeness:** Ensuring that all assets and liabilities are included in the balance sheet.
- **7. Valuation:** Ensuring that assets and liabilities are appropriately valued and displayed in the balance sheet at their right value.
- **8. Disclosure:** To ensure that the assets and liabilities in the balance sheet are reported in accordance with legislative requirements and accounting standards.

17.6.2 Importance of Verification

Assets and liabilities are critical parts of any company's operations. One of the key tasks of an auditor is to verify the assets and liabilities in order to reveal the exact financial position of the firm. An auditor must be satisfied that the assets and liabilities listed in the Balance Sheet are correct. Both the Profit and Loss Account and the Balance Sheet will not provide a clear and fair picture if the Balance Sheet contains inaccurate assets. As a result, asset verification and valuation are critical for business, and their importance are underlined below:

- 1. Showing the actual financial position: A balance sheet is prepared to show a company's actual financial position. Such a Balance Sheet does not provide true and fair information if the proper valuation is not performed. As a result, asset verification and valuation are required to provide information about the company's actual financial position.
- **2. Ascertaining the real position of profit or loss:** If assets are not properly valued, depreciation and other expenses will be incorrect. As a

- result, proper asset and liability valuation is required to calculate the actual amount of profit or loss.
- **3. Increase goodwill:** A proper valuation provides accurate information about a company's profitability and financial position. As a result, people can obtain information that fosters a positive attitude toward the company. The public's positive attitude can increase goodwill.
- **4. Assures safe investment to shareholders:** Verification and valuation provide shareholders with accurate information about assets and liabilities, ensuring the safety of their investment.
- **5. Easy for sale:** The company can be sold at the price listed in the Balance Sheet, but assets that have not been valued require valuation before selling the company.
- **6.** Easy to get a loan: Companies disclose their Balance Sheets, which are audited, for public consumption, which increases public trust. As a result, businesses can easily obtain loans from financial institutions.
- 7. Easy to get compensation: Whenever a loss occurs as a result of an incident, the insurance company compensates on the basis of the valuation of assets. As a result, the company can easily obtain compensation.

17.7 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VOUCHING AND VERIFICATION

Vouching and verification may seem the same but they are actually different from each other.

The various differences between vouching and verification are listed below:

Table 17.1 Difference between Vouching and Verification

Basis	Vouching	Verification
Nature	Vouching refers to the examination of the entries relating to the transactions recorded in the books of account.	Verification refers to the examination of the assets and liabilities appearing in the Balance Sheet of the concern.
Basis	It is based on a documentary examination	Physical inspection as well as documentary examination is conducted.
Time	The transactions of the whole year are analysed before the end of the year.	Verification is done at the end of the year when the Balance Sheet is prepared.
Scope	It has no concern with valuation.	It includes valuation as well

Personal	The task of vouching is done by juniors like audit clerks.	The task of verification is done by the auditor himself or by his assistant.
Tests of details	Vouching includes tests of details of transactions.	Verification means a test of details of balances.
Evidence	It gathers audit evidence regarding assertions like occurrences, completeness, and measurement of transactions.	It gathers evidence regarding management assertions like existence, rights and obligations, valuation and disclosure.

17.8 CONSUMABLE/ STOCK REGISTER

A stock register is a database that a company keeps track of the history of its stock offerings. This database provides extensive information on the company's stock and is used to keep track of the company's shareholders. Maintaining an accurate and full stock register is crucial for publicly listed firms to guarantee that the company has correct information about its shares and stockholders at all times.

The stock register contains information regarding stock offerings, buybacks, and retirements, allowing the firm to know how many shares are outstanding at any particular moment. The record for each share held by a shareholder has a unique number to identify the share, as well as information about the owner such as name, address, and the par value of the share at the time it was acquired. Dates detailing when stock was issued and acquired are also contained in the stock register, allowing the corporation to track its shares through time.

When a stockholder experiences a theft or loss that necessitates the replacement of a stock certificate, the stock register is used to validate the claim and record details regarding the replacement. Similarly, when stock is sold, it must be re-registered with the new owner's details and the transfer. Personnel in charge of monitoring the stock register are responsible for keeping it as current and complete as feasible.

Stockholders are accountable for ensuring that the information in the register is correct. If persons relocate or change their names, this information must be recorded in order for them to collect dividends and vote on matters submitted to a stockholder vote. Failure to keep proper records might be a concern if stocks are transferred or other complications arise. In the case of a loss, for example, if the register contains out-of-date information, proving ownership of shares may necessitate extensive documentation.

The stock register displays who owns shares in a firm, specifies the voting rights associated with different types of shares, and gives additional information about a company's ownership and stock history. It may be a great historical resource in addition to being useful for conducting business.

Budget, Audit & Secretarial Practice Historians may be interested in reading ancient stock registers and share certificates to learn more about a company's or industry's history, or to gather knowledge about a certain time period.

17.9 ASSET REGISTER

An asset register is a thorough record of all firm assets in its most basic form. It contains information on assets such as their location, condition, and owner. An asset register allows firms to keep track of the status, purchase date, location, price, depreciation, and the current value of each asset. Although creating and maintaining a comprehensive asset register on a daily basis may appear to be a lot of administrative work, it can have a significant impact on a company's bottom line. So much so that an accurate register can boost a company's sales and cash flow by 5–18%. The various advantages of an assets register are discussed below:

- Provides complete transparency of all asset data;
- Ensures whether the assets are complying with regulatory standards;
- Provides an accurate audit trail;
- Assists in asset tracking and identification;
- Prevents assets from being lost or stolen with accurate location data;
- Calculate depreciation; and
- Estimates maintenance and repair costs.

Check Your Progress B:

1.	What is onsite verification?
2.	Vouching is the essence of auditing". Comment.

Audit	Process
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3.	What is an Assets Register?
4.	How does verification of assets and liabilities help in increasing goodwill?

17.10 LET US SUM UP

Auditing basically refers to the independent examination of the financial statements of a firm in order to express an opinion whether the financial statements are prepared in accordance or compliance with an identified reporting framework. It basically is the examination of various books of the accounts as presented in the annual report by someone independent of the organization.

An audit is crucial because it provides legitimacy to financial statements and gives confidence to the shareholders that the accounts are appropriate and fair. It can also aid in the improvement of an organization's internal controls and procedures. The significance of auditing can be understood by the following points: Credibility of financial statements, Fraud prevention and detection, Assess the risk of misstatement, Cost of capital and Enables the pursuit of business objectives.

Audits in India are classified into two main types, Statutory Audit which are performed to report to the government and shareholders on the current state of a company's finances and accounts and Internal Audit which are performed at the request of internal management to examine the financial health of a firm and assess its operational effectiveness.

A voucher is basically a documentary proof that authenticates any transactions. It proves that the entries made in the books of accounts are actual and genuine. Vouching is the process of analyzing business enterprise vouchers. It is basically a step in auditing that is taken to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the transactions recorded in the company's books of accounts.

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Vouching is critical for an Auditor for the following reasons: Vouching is the backbone of auditing, Vouching is the essence of auditing and Vouching is important to see whether evidence is correct or not.

Verification is the auditing process of proving the truth by which the auditors confirm with themselves the actual existence of assets and liabilities available in the financial statements of the firm. It not only includes the verification of the existence of assets and liabilities but also about the legal ownership and possession of assets, their exact valuation, and ascertaining that the asset is unencumbered by any debt. There are two types of verification; offsite verification and onsite verification.

Assets and liabilities are critical parts of any company's operations. One of the key tasks of an auditor is to verify the assets and liabilities in order to reveal the exact financial position of the firm. An auditor must be satisfied that the assets and liabilities listed in the Balance Sheet are correct. Both the Profit and Loss Account and the Balance Sheet will not provide a clear and fair picture if the Balance Sheet contains inaccurate assets. As a result, asset verification and valuation are critical for business, and their importance are: Showing the actual financial position, Ascertaining the real position of profit or loss, Increase goodwill, Assures safe investment to shareholders, Easy to get a loan and others.

A stock register is a database that a company keeps track of the history of its stock offerings. This database provides extensive information on the company's stock and is used to keep track of the company's shareholders. Maintaining an accurate and full stock register is crucial for publicly listed firms to guarantee that the company has correct information about its shares and stockholders at all times.

An asset register is a thorough record of all firm assets in its most basic form. It contains information on assets such as their location, condition, and owner. An asset register allows firms to keep track of the status, purchase date, location, price, depreciation, and the current value of each asset. Although creating and maintaining a comprehensive asset register on a daily basis may appear to be a lot of administrative work, it can have a significant impact on a company's bottom line.

17.11 KEYWORDS

Asset register: It is a thorough record of all firm assets in its most basic form. It contains information on assets such as their location, condition, and owner.

Auditing: It refers to the independent examination of the financial statements of a firm in order to express an opinion whether the financial statements are prepared in accordance or compliance with an identified reporting framework.

Off Site Verification: It includes verifying paperwork, official records, and images, as well as interrogating workers who are responsible or otherwise regarded to be a reputable source of information for the institution.

Onsite verification: It entails the verifying party personally visiting the facility and learning all of the pertinent information on the premises where it is located and operated. In certain nations, the procedure may be governed by legislation.

Stock Register: It is a database that a company keeps track of the history of its stock offerings. This database provides extensive information on the company's stock and is used to keep track of the company's shareholders.

Verification: It is the auditing process of proving the truth by which the auditors confirm with themselves the actual existence of assets and liabilities available in the financial statements of the firm.

Voucher: A voucher is basically a documentary proof that authenticates any transactions. It proves that the entries made in the books of accounts are actual and genuine.

Vouching: It is the process of analyzing business enterprise vouchers. It is basically a step in auditing that is taken to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the transactions recorded in the company's books of accounts.

17.12 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1. "An audit provides legitimacy to financial statements." Comment
- 2. What is Audit? Why is it important?
- 3. How is statutory audit different from internal audit?
- 4. Explain the concept of vouching.
- 5. What are the principles of vouching?
- 6. What is verification of assets and liabilities?
- 7. List the objectives of verification.
- 8. Why is verification of assets and liabilities important?
- 9. How is vouching different from verification?
- 10. What are stock registers?

Note: These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.

UNIT 18 NATURE AND SCOPE OF SECRETARIAL WORK

Structure

100	01:
18.0	Objectives
10.0	Objectives

- 18.1 Introduction
- 18.2 Definition of the Secretary?
- 18.3 Importance of a Secretary
- 18.4 Role of a Secretary
 - 18.4.1 As an Office Executive
 - 18.4.2 As a Liaison Officer
 - 18.4.3 As an Advisor
- 18.5 Duties of a Secretary
- 18.6 Qualifications of a Secretary
- 18.7 Importance of Secretarial work
- 18.8 Types of Secretaries
- 18.9 Private Secretary
 - 18.9.1 Qualifications
 - 18.9.2 Duties
- 18.10 Let Us Sum Up
- 18.11 Keywords
- 18.12 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 18.13 Terminal Questions

18.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- state the definition of secretary;
- explain the importance of a secretary and secretarial work;
- describe the roles and duties of a secretary;
- discuss the qualifications of a secretary;
- give the definition of private secretary; and
- explain the qualification and duties of a private secretary.

18.1 INTRODUCTION

Every organisation needs an office through which all the secretarial work is performed. As this work pervades all types of activities connected with the

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organisation, it necessitates the existence of an officer or executive who should assist, overview and coordinate the whole work in an efficient manner and keep the integrity of the organisation intact. In modern day common parlance such an executive is termed as Secretary. In this unit you will study the meaning, importance, duties and qualifications of a secretary in detail, and also learn about various types of secretaries.

18.2 DEFINITION OF THE SECRETARY

The Oxford Dictionary gives the following meaning of the word 'Secretary": "One whose office it is to write for another; especially one who is employed to conduct correspondence, to keep record and to transact various other businesses, for L another person or for a society, corporation or public body."

Actually the word 'secretary' is derived from the Latin term 'Secretarius' which means "the keeper of secrets" or "the confidential officer". Similarly, the Manual s; Secretarial Practice also refers to the profession of a secretary as one of the oldest one, and that wherever "there was a man of action, there, too, was a man of the pen to record his deeds".

Thus, ordinarily speaking, the special features of a 'secretary' may be stated as follows:

- 1) The secretary is a person, male or female.
- 2) He/she should be able to perform the works of confidential nature.
- 3) He/she works for another person or an organisation.
- 4) He/she holds an official position.

In modern times, the secretary occupies a very important position in industry, commerce, social institutions, clubs, government offices and even in the case of individuals like statesmen. physicians, lawyers and Members of Parliament. His duties and functions include conducting correspondence, keeping of records and accounts. writing of minutes and reports as well as acting as Public relations officer and representative of the employer.

18.3 IMPORTANCE OF A SECRETARY

The nature and functions of a secretary differ with each individual institution to which he is attached. Mostly, he works behind the scenes but in no way does it reduce the importance of his office. A secretary, nowadays, is an indispensable part of any organisation, be it commercial, social or political. In certain cases he enjoys a legal status as, for example, a company secretary, or a Secretary of a Government Department, while in other situations he is employed to assist the employer to perform certain routine duties leaving him free to concentrate on more important matters. But, in every situation, the secretary is the most trustworthy person of the institution or the employer whom he/she works for.

18.4 ROLE OF A SECRETARY

The nature of a secretary's role can be explained only by reference to his position in relation to his employer and the functions he is required to perform depending on the terms of his employment, the secretary may hold a very responsible position in the organisation he serves, or his role may be that of a confidential assistant or one engaged in performing only routine clerical work. Basically, it is the nature and importance of his function that determine the secretary's role. It depends in turn on such factors as the nature of the organisation, its size, the employer's willingness to delegate work carrying responsibility, as well as his own ability and willingness to undertake responsible work. The secretary's role may also be determined by the rights, duties and responsibilities under law, as in the case of a company.

However, in modern organisations, the secretary is generally required to perform the role of one or more of the following positions:

- 1) Office executive,
- 2) Liaison officer,
- 3) Advisor to management.

18.4.1 As an Office Executive

In his position the secretary is required to discharge the responsibility of organising and managing day to day work of the office. This involves planning, supervising, coordinating and controlling secretarial and routine clerical work, e.g. correspondence, record keeping, accounts, etc. ?'he secretarial work to be supervised and co-ordinated may include convening meetings by issuing notice, making necessary arrangements for the meetings to be held, keeping record of the proceedings at tile meeting, etc. Being the administrative head of the office, a secretary is required to attend to all matters relating to the office staff, involving recruitment and selection, allocation of duties, monitoring performance, and maintaining discipline in the office.

18.4.2 As a Liaison Officer

The secretary acts as a link between business executives and outside parties including clients, customers, and the public. He also acts as a link between higher level managers and the administrative staff. In this capacity, the secretary in a way shields his employer from the necessity of dealing directly with the staff and outsiders on day-to-day routine matters, and on subjects of general relevance. When required, he acts as the mouthpiece of management to communicate decisions concerning the staff or members of the public. The secretary may also have to play the role of Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the organisation, keeping the public informed about the activities of the concern and dealing with correspondence in that connection. Indeed the

secretary is often found to be most capable of performing this role as he is thoroughly conversant with the objectives, plans and programmes of the organisation activities. Taken together, the secretary acting as liaison officer enables busy executives and managers to concentrate on their primary responsibilities in the long-run interest of the organisation.

18.4.3 As an Advisor

One of the important roles that the secretary may be called upon to perform is that of an adviser to management. This may arise out of necessity, for busy executives and managers are not always able to muster by themselves all information pertaining to a decision-situation, particularly decisions on policy matters. The secretary can fill this gap provided he keeps himself abreast of latest developments in various fields and is regularly in touch with sources of information. Being informative and having intimate knowledge of the day-to-day activities of the organisation, the secretary is in an eminent position to give advice to management in the form of suggestions for making appropriate policy decisions. The advisory role of the secretary may be a part of his official status, or it may be a privilege that he earns by virtue of his integrity and efficiency. A secretary may be said to have reached an ideal position if the management invites suggestions from him or seeks his advice reflecting the trust and confidence reposed in him. Of course, the exact nature of the advisory role of a secretary depends on the nature and size of an organisation. Generally speaking, secretaries of trade associations, professional bodies, cultural organisations, company secretaries and secretaries of government departments are required to assume the advisory role in varying degrees.

18.5 DUTIES OF A SECRETARY

The duties of a Secretary may widely differ depending on the terms and conditions of his employment and the employer's activities, and his status in the organisation. Distinction may be made broadly between the duties of a 'Routine Secretary' and an 'Executive Secretary'. A 'Routine' secretary generally is the executive head of the office, managing day to day office work. His duties mainly consist of organising and controlling office activities, i.e. providing clerical services to the organisation, efficiently and economically. As regards the activities of the office related with general services like correspondence, maintenance of records, etc., concerning all the departments the duties of the secretary are like those of a line executive. These duties include: selection, training, placement and remuneration of office personnel; providing necessary forms, stationery, machines and equipment needed for office work; and providing congenial working environment to the office staff for efficient discharge of their responsibilities. Besides the above general services, there are some office activities which are performed in different functional departments by the departmental staff. With respect to these office activities, the secretary tenders advice to the

Budget, Audit and Secretarial Practice departmental heads and his duties are those of a 'staff officer.

The duties of an 'executive secretary' are wider in scope. The 'Executive Secretary' is entrusted with many administrative and managerial functions and granted executive powers accordingly. His duties may include: organisation and management of the secretarial department covering all personnel matters; conducting correspondence with other departments a\$ well as outsiders; organisation and control of accounting functions; representing management for negotiating contracts, settling legal disputes, etc.; maintaining liaison with clients, customers, and the public, as well as government departments. employees union, dealers and suppliers.

Check Your Progress A

1)	Who is a secretary?
2)	T :-4 41 :
2)	List the main roles of a secretary.
	THE BEABLES

- 3) Which of the following statements are True and which are False?
 - i) Anyone who deals with other's confidential letters is a secretary.
 - ii) A secretary invariably works for another person or organisation.
 - iii) A secretary may or may not be required to act as a stenographer.
 - iv) As an office executive, the secretary is responsible for discipline in the office.
 - v) As PRO the role of a secretary is that of a liaison officer.
 - vi) The secretary cannot give advice to managers but only suggests ways and means of resolving problems.
 - vii) An 'executive secretary' has the responsibility of ensuring that the quality of goods produced is of the highest standard.
 - viii) A 'Routine Secretary' is only concerned with the office services which are centralised in the general office.

18.6 QUALIFICATIONS OF A SECRETARY

What qualifications a secretary should possess to discharge his duties properly is a relevant question one may ask either to assess one's own eligibility for a secretary's position, or to recruit a secretary. Since he has to undertake a variety of tasks, a secretary must possess certain basic academic qualifications, intellectual qualities and personal attributes, besides specialized knowledge to suit the requirements of any particular type of organisation; which will enable him to perform his duties successfully. Some of the essential qualifications and attributes which a secretary should possess are briefly discussed below:

- 1) General Education: Irrespective of the type of organisation to be served, it is essential for all secretaries to possess educational qualification of a reasonably high standard. A Bachelor's degree in Arts, Commerce or Law is generally considered a desirable qualification.
- 2) Proficiency in English Language: Verbal and written communications through correspondence happen to be an important part of secretariat work. Hence proficiency in English language is essential for a secretary to be able to interpret communications received as well as draft letters, reports, precis, etc. efficiently. With an academic degree of high standard, one may have acquired good command over the English language. But it may also be necessary for a secretary to have knowledge and training in specialized use of English for business correspondence, drafting of resolutions and minutes of meetings, press releases, etc.
- 3) Knowledge of another language: In India, knowledge of Hindi and some of the regional languages may be quite useful for a secretary seeking employment in any national-level organisation. Likewise, a secretary employed in an organisation having world-wide operations or branch offices in several foreign countries, is likely to be found more useful if he has working knowledge of one or more foreign languages.
- 4) General Knowledge: Intellectual curiosity and reading habits help one to acquire general knowledge. A person who is well read and mentally alert makes a valuable secretary as he may be able to perform his duties better in a complex situation requiring all round general knowledge. Moreover, with sound general knowledge, a secretary is in a better position to provide information of general importance that management may need from time to time. He can also give better advice.
- 5) Practical Knowledge of Office Management: Since a secretary's job generally includes organisation and management of office activities, he should have practical knowledge of office methods and equipment, of modern methods of filing and indexing, use of personal computers, and operation of office intercommunication systems. He must also have knowledge of the methods of selection and training of employees, payfixation, and provision of pension and provident fund benefits, welfare amenities, etc.

Budget, Audit and Secretarial Practice

- 6) **Personal qualities:** Besides the qualifications mentioned above, the following personal qualities are also likely to contribute to the success of a secretary in his job:
 - i) A good personality which will command respect and inspire confidence in his subordinates and colleagues.
 - ii) A healthy physical appearance, cheerful bearing and energetic disposition iii) Qualities of head and heart : good judgement and presence of mind, a strong sense of justice.
 - iii) Self-confidence and self-discipline
 - iv) Sincerity, integrity of character, and loyalty
 - v) Sense of responsibility, honour and dignity
 - vi) Tact, discretion and good manners,
 - vii) A good memory of facts, faces and names.

18.7 IMPORTANCE OF SECRETARIAL WORK

The indispensable nature and importance of secretarial work can hardly be disputed in the modern world. As organised activities in the social and economic spheres have expanded and assumed greater complexity, there has been an increasing need for secretarial services to assist persons in authority in their day-to-day administration. The significance of secretarial work has been particularly recognised in industry trade and commerce characterised by vast expansion in size and complexity of the organisation following technological advice at a fast pace in manufacturing, transport and communicator along with expanding markets for products.

The importance of secretarial work may be attributed to (a) the onerous nature of secretary's functions, and (b) the increasing dependence of management on secretarial assistance.

The job of a secretary generally carries onerous responsibilities. The private secretary of a doctor or lawyer, or that of a business executive, is often known to have become indispensable to the employer due to the nature of work handled by the secretary, which may include matters of confidential nature as well as financial affairs. The secretary of any social organisation, educational institution, co-operative society or registered bodies has also to undertake work carrying heavy responsibility. A company secretary besides acting as executive head of the office has several duties and responsibilities cast on him under law. He has also to bear administrative responsibilities like functional managers besides having to perform the role of advisor of the top management.

A significant part of the secretarial work is carried out through the office, of which the basic functions are: (i) receiving and collecting information 7, ii) recording information or making records, (iii) processing information

involving computation and statistical work, and (iv) communicating information. On the one hand, the office is required to supply information as collected, recorded and processed by it to the management as and when required; on the other hand, it has also the duty of communicating policies, directives and instructions issued by management to managers in different departments for their guidance.

It is on the basis of accurate information and factual data provided by the office that management can formulate plans and policies and assess the results of planned efforts. Again, it is with the system of communication provided by the office that management succeeds in directing, guiding and coordinating various activities. Also effective control over business operations can only be possible if relevant factual information is provided by the office.

The facility of computerisation has made recording and processing of information as well as its storage much easier. But collecting information and receiving information from various sources continues to be a stupendous task. Besides, classifying information and data received, and preserving the same in proper form so as to be easily retrievable from computer memory requires special care.

So voluminous and varied arc the information and data and so dynamic is the nature of environment in which organisations function that management of all modern enterprises have come to depend heavily on the systems and procedures governing the flow of information, also known as the Management Informations System (MIS), which the secretary has to organise and manage.

Another aspect of secretarial work which adds to its importance is related to meetings. Of all the secretarial services provided to the top management, those pertaining to meetings have vital importance, for decisions taken at meetings and the discussion that takes place in course of the meetings happen generally to be the basis of action. The responsibility of the secretary in this connection includes convening meetings, issuing valid notice with agenda and memoranda for consideration, securing adequate accommodation and seating arrangements, assisting the chairman in conducting the meeting, recording the proceedings and preparing the minutes of the meeting, and finally circulation and confirmation of the minutes. Follow up action involving communication of the decisions to the concerned parties is also required to be taken by the secretary. The management invariably depends on the secretary to ensure that rules and regulations as laid down in legal enactments or by the organisation are strictly complied with, so that the validity of meetings and proceedings/minutes are not-disputed or challenged.

Check Your Progress B

Fill in the blanks selecting the correct words/phrases from those given within brackets:

- ii) For a secretary, knowledge of specialised use of English is necessary for......... (precis writing, drafting resolutions, interpreting communication)
- iv) Secretarial work carried out through the office includes of policies, orders and instructions. (Formulation, communication, drafting, channelisation)

18.8 TYPES OF SECRETARIES

Keeping in view the varied type of functions and duties, which may be performed by secretaries, one may distinguish between the following types of secretaries:

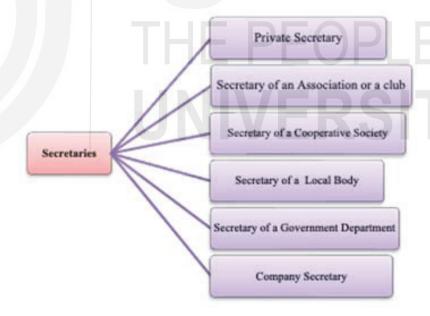


Figure 18.1 Types of Secretaries

In this unit we shall examine the nature of a private secretary's job, the qualification he/she should possess, and the duties generally assigned to him/her. The relevant aspect of the position of other types of secretaries will be discussed in the following units of this Block.

18.9 PRIVATE SECRETARY

A Private Secretary is a secretary to an individual official, administrator or chief executive of a business firm. The main object of employing a private secretary by an individual is to shift some of the burden of his responsibilities on to the secretary and thus relieve himself of certain routine matters, such as arranging meetings, fixing appointments, handling mails, drafting speeches, preparing notes, making travel arrangements, etc. The work of private secretary is very confident and intimate in nature which demands complete loyalty to the employer.

A private secretary, usually employed by a prominent citizen or official in high position, is expected to sacrifice his personal interests and even accept the blame for: mistakes of his employer in good grace. As he is employed for personal work, he must thoroughly understand his employer and know his likes and dislikes, habits, tastes, hobbies, matters of interest, and all other details concerning his life and background.

When an individual decides to have a private secretary, he looks for someone to whom he an delegate some of his own routine duties, who can take care of his I responsibilities whenever required to do so in his absence, to whom he can confide private and confidential matters, and who will be sufficiently tactful so as to maintain a cordial relations with every one he/she has to deal with.

Although the work of a private secretary is varied and interesting, it is often quite exacting too. Usually there are no fixed duty hours, and he/she has to bear with the changing mood and temperament of the employment.

18.9.1 Qualifications

The status and eminence of the person whom the private secretary has to serve generally indicate the qualifications and personal accomplishments that should be possessed by the secretary. In most cases, a private secretary is expected to have the following qualifications:

- 1) A reasonably high standard of general education with a Bachelor's degree;
- 2) Instruction and training in secretarial course run by a professional institution;
- 3) Skill in stenography and typing work;
- 4) Practical training in office practices and procedures including acquaintance with office equipments and machines;
- 5) Reasonably good general knowledge;
- 6) Knowledge of a foreign language if necessary;
- 7) Personal qualities may include

Sincerity	Cheerfulness	
Resourcefulness	Loyalty	
Discretion	Dependability	
Tactfulness	Orderliness	
Sense of proportion	Punctuality	

Put together, a private secretary is supposed to be an all rounder. He is expected to be well versed in all relevant matters, keep good contacts, and work behind the scene unless it is desired otherwise. He should be well informed about the activities of his boss without being too inquisitive about his personal matters. He should not, unnecessarily, pry into the professional affairs of the boss but must always be ready to give advice based on facts. He should always look dignified and in no way do anything which might lower the image of his officer or the employer.

A private secretary should be healthy, alert. knowledge, willing to work for long hours, adjusting to a changing environment, and above all should be a trust-worthy representative of his employer. He need not be highly educated but should be thorough and well-versed in matters relating to his duties

18.9.2 Duties

The duties of the private secretary are bound to vary depending upon the employer's requirements. The duties of the private secretary of a Minister will naturally be different from those of a Member of Parliament, or of a Business Executive, or of a solicitor, or of a College Principal. A private secretary who has to attend to the needs of the employer both at the latter's residence and office may be entrusted with a wider variety of work as compared to one who attends to the employer's needs only during office hours.

Broadly speaking, the duties performed by a private secretary may be generalised and discussed under the following heads:

- i) Routine Office duties
- ii) Receptionist's duties
- iii) literary duties
- iv) Financial duties
- v) Domestic and Social duties
- vi) Duties relating to meetings
- vii) Miscellaneous duties

Let us examine the nature of these duties

i) Routine Office Duties: They include taking shorthand dictation, drafting and typing of letters, handling incoming and outgoing mail, filing and indexing of letters, maintenance of records, maintenance of books and registers, and operation of office appliances such as telephone,

duplicator, Dictaphone, fax, etc.

- **ii)** Receptionist's Duties: These duties consist of handling inward and outward telephone calls and keeping a record of the same, attending to visitors and their enquiries, answering enquiries over the telephone, screening and fixing appointments and engagements, maintaining diary and memory aids for the boss and for himself/herself.
- **iii)** Literary Duties: These duties are drafting of routine letters, reports, speeches or statements on behalf of the employer, making precise and summaries of letters and reports, proof-reading and attending to printing of books, pamphlets and speeches, etc.
- **iv) Financial Duties:** These include handling of employer's bank transactions, payment of bills, taxes, staff salaries, subscriptions, donations, maintenance of records of the employer's investments and income there from, payment of insurance premiums, filing of insurance claims, renewal of policies, filing of Income Tax Returns, and Keeping expense records including travel expenses and preparing bills therefore.
- v) Domestic and Social Duties: They consist of looking after the household affairs of the employer, payment of wages and salaries of domestic staff, making arrangements for parties, luncheons, dinners and other entertainments, sending invitations, making arrangements for tours, travel reservations, attending to needs of house guests, acknowledging letters, and sending messages of condolences, congratulations, and greetings on special occasions.
- vi) Duties Relating to Meetings: They cover the work of preparing the agenda, issuing notices, making arrangements for holding the meetings, arranging documents and files to be needed in course of the meetings, making arrangements for voting, drafting minutes, preparing reports of the committees or subcommittees under the dictions of the chairman, and following up the decisions taken in the meetings.
- **vii) Miscellaneous Duties:** May include all such acts that build up the image of the employer and develop better public relations subject to the professional objectives of the boss.

Check Your Progress C

1.	Define 'Private Secretary'.

- 2. Which of the following statements are True and which are False?
 - i) A private secretary must perform his duties keeping in view the likes and dislikes of the employer.

- ii) The private secretary of a lawyer must have a Bachelor's degree in law.
- iii) The private secretary does not have to attend to telephone calls if there is also a receptionist and telephone operator.
- iv) One of the social duties of a private secretary is to write letters regularly to the relatives of the employers on his one half..
- v) The private secretary is invariably expected to minimise the expenses of the employer.
- vi) Some of the literary duties of a private secretary are actually routine duties.
- vii) 'The private secretary has a right to attend and cast vote in the meetings chaired by his employer.
- viii) The private secretary should not ordinarily interfere with the professional affairs of the boss.

18.10 LET US SUM UP

A 'Secretary' is one whose office it is to write for another; especially one who is employed to conduct correspondence, to keep record and to transact various other businesses for another person or for a society, corporation or public body.

In modern times, the secretary occupies a very important position in industry, commerce, social institutions, clubs, government offices and even in the case of individuals like statesmen, physicians, lawyers and Members of Parliament. In certain cases, the secretary enjoys a legal status, while in other situations he is employed to assist the employer to perform certain routine duties leaving him free to concentrate on more important matters.

Basically, it is the nature and importance of his functions that determine the role of a secretary. In modern organisations, the secretary's role may be described ill terms of his position as - (1) Office executive, (2) Liaison officer, and (3) Adviser to management. As office executive, the secretary is entrusted with the responsibility of organising and managing the day to day work of the office. As liaison officer, he acts as a link between business executives and outside parties including clients, customers, and the public, as also between higher level managers and the administrative staff. He may also play the role of PRO. The secretary's role as adviser to management arises out of necessity to brief busy executives and managers who are not always in a position to muster by themselves all information pertaining to a decision-situation particularly those relating to policy matters. The advisory role of a secretary may be part of his official status, or it may be a privilege that he earns by virtue of his qualities.

The duties of a Secretary may differ depending upon whether he is a 'Routine Secretary' or 'Executive Secretary'. A 'Routine secretary' generally has the duties of the executive head of the office providing clerical services to all other departments. With respect to departmental offices, the secretary's duties are those of a staff officer. The duties of an 'Executive Secretary' include a wide range of administrative and managerial functions with corresponding executive powers.

The essential qualifications and attributes which a Secretary should possess are: General education of a reasonably high standard, proficiency in English language, knowledge of Hindi and regional languages, sound general knowledge, practical knowledge of office management, and an impressive personality.

The importance of secretarial work may be attributed to (a) the onerous nature of secretary's functions, and (b) the increasing dependence of management on secretarial assistance. As organised activities in the social and economic fields have expanded and assumed greater complexities, there has been an increasing need for secretarial services to assist persons in authority in their day to day administration as well as decision-making.

Consistent with the variety of functions and duties which may be performed by secretaries, one may distinguish between several types of secretaries e.g. Private secretary; Secretary of an Association or a Club; Secretary of a Cooperative Society; Secretary of a local body; Secretary of a Government Department; Company Secretary.

A Private Secretary is a secretary to an individual official, administrator or chief executive of a business firm. The main object of employing a private secretary is to shift some of the responsibilities of an individual to the secretary and thus relieve the individual of certain routine duties such as arranging meetings, fixing appointments, handling mail, drafting reports, etc.

A private secretary is generally expected to have the following qualifications: General, education of a reasonably high standard; training in secretarial work; skill in stenography and typing; practical training in office procedures; good general knowledge; knowledge of foreign language if necessary; personal qualities of sincerity, resourcefulness, discretion, tact, sense of proportion, cheerfulness, loyalty, etc.

The duties of a private secretary may be generalised under several categories, e.g. Routine office duties; Receptionist's duties; Literary duties; Financial duties; Domestic and Social duties; Duties relating to meetings; and miscellaneous duties.

18.11 KEYWORDS

Executive Secretary: A secretary who is entrusted with a wide range of administrative and managerial functions.

Liaison Officer: One who acts as a link between executive and outside parties flower level staff.

Office Executive: One who is entrusted with the responsibilities of organising and managing day to day office services.

Private Secretary: A secretary employed to perform the routine duties of an individual, or an administrative officer or a business executive

Secretary: One whose office it is to write for another conduct correspondence, keep record and transact various other businesses for another person or for a society, or corporation or public body.

Staff Officer: One who renders specialised advisory services.

18.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- A 3 i) False ii) True iii) True iv) True v) True vi) True vii) False viii) False
- B i) information, advice ii) Drafting resolutions iii) hindi, regional iv) Communication
 - v) Information, data
- C i) True ii) False iii) False iv) False False vi) True vii) False True v) viii)

18.13 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1) Who is a Secretary? Point out the importance of secretaries in the business world. Outline the functions of a secretary as an office executive.
- 2) Discuss the role of a Secretary as (a) Executive head of the office, (b) Liaison officer, and (c) Adviser to management.
- 3) What qualifications should a Secretary possess? Give reasons to justify the essentiality of the qualifications.
- 4) Distinguish between the duties of a 'Routine Secretary' and those of an 'Executive Secretary'
- 5) Write an explanatory note on the duties of a Private Secretary.
- 6) Define the position of a Private Secretary. What qualifications should a Private Secretary possess?
- 7) Describe the nature of duties of the Secretary of a modern organisation and bring out the importance of secretarial work in that context.

Note: These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.

UNIT 19 SECRETARIAL FUNCTIONS IN ORGANISATION

Structure

19.0	Objectives
19.0	Objectives

- 19.1 Introduction
- 19.2 Secretary of an Association or a Club
- 19.3 Secretary of a Co-operative Society
- 19.4 Secretary of a Local Body
- 19.5 Secretary of a Government Department
 - 19.5.1 Appointment
 - 19.5.2 Administrative and Advisory Functions
- 19.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 19.7 Keywords
- 19.8 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 19.9 Terminal Questions

19.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the status and functions of a secretary of an association or a club;
- know about secretary of a co-operative society;
- explain about secretary of a local body; and
- discuss the functions of a secretary of a government department.

19.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding unit you learnt about the nature, scope and importance of secretarial work, the role, qualifications and duties of a secretary and the position of a private secretary. In this unit you will learn about the status, role and functions of secretaries of different types of organisations such as an association or a club, a co-operative society, a local body and a government department.

19.2 SECRETARY OF AN ASSOCIATION OR A CLUB

Trade and professional associations, trade unions, cultural institutions, charitable institutions, religious institutions, sports clubs, etc., usually appoint a whole-time paid secretary to conduct the day to day activities of the

organisation. A secretary of such organisations acts as an agent and advisor of the managing committee. These associations may also appoint, nominate or elect an Honorary General Secretary from amongst their own members, subject to their respective bye-laws. The Honorary General Secretary does not draw any salary, but he is provided various perks and facilities \$0 as to carry out his duties efficiently.

Role and Functions

Ordinarily, the secretary of an association or a club performs the following functions:

- 1) He plays the role of an executive officer, agent and adviser of the managing committee.
- 2) The secretary is the chief executive officer of the association. In this capacity he undertakes all administrative functions such as recruitment and supervision of the office staff, correspondence, receipts and payments of money, preparing statements of accounts and arranging their audit.
- 3) The secretary, as the chief officer of the association or club, supervises and conducts its activities according to the aims and objects. He looks after the registration of new members, collection of subscription and donations, purchase and maintenance of equipment, and arrangement of parties and social gatherings.
- 4) The secretary is the convenor of all meetings. He calls the meetings of the general body as well as the managing committee. In this connection, he issues notices and agenda, makes arrangements for the meetings, prepares documents to be placed before the meeting, records the proceedings and circulates the minutes. He also looks after the follow up action.
- 5) The secretary is an agent and mouthpiece of the managing committee of the association. He executes the decisions of the committee, acts as a public relations officer, and issues press statements and notifications.
- 6) The secretary is the main advisor of the managing committee. On all matters relating to framing of rules and their amendments, actions to be taken for infringement of rules by members, or on any other legal matter, he has to give his expert opinion to the best of his knowledge.
- 7) He is the custodian of properties and investments of the association or club. He should ensure that they are properly maintained and kept secured from any misuse.
- 8) As the PRO of his association, a secretary should cultivate the goodwill of outsiders by giving them the most cordial treatment on all occasions.

19.3 SECRETARY OF A CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY

A co-operative society is a voluntary association of persons having common needs and interest, who come together for self-help and mutual aid promoting their common interest & operative credit society, consumers co-operative society and co-operative housing society are some of the common types of co-operatives. These societies are governed by the Co-operative Societies Act, of 1912 (a Central Government legislation) and the Co-operative Societies Acts and Rules framed by different State Governments. The organisational structure of co-operative societies are more or less similar in all the States.

Generally, every co-operative society has three office bearers and managing committee as provided for in its Bye Laws. The office bearers are (i) The President, (ii) The Secretary, and iii) The Treasurer. Usually, all these office bearers and the members of the managing committee work on honorary basis. But, if the society is a large one, it can employ a whole-time paid secretary. This secretary may be appointed from amongst the members or he can be an outsider.

Status and Functions

The secretary of a co-operative society is primarily an office executive but he also acts as an agent and adviser. He should be well acquainted with the Co-operative Societies Act, office organisation and procedures. He should be tactful and hardworking as he is expected to perform a variety of functions which are enumerated below

- 1) He has to manage and supervise the routine office work including correspondence, maintenance of records, registers and accounts and preparation of statements and returns to be submitted to the Registrar of Co-operative Societies.
- 2) He issues notices regarding the meetings, makes arrangements for holding them, records the proceedings and drafts the minutes thereof: He also makes arrangements for the annual election of the managing committee. The secretary is generally present at all meetings, produces relevant papers required at the meetings and signs the minutes of meetings along with the Chairman.
- 3) He acts as the agent and mouthpiece of the managing committee in its dealings with the staff, shareholders, and the general public. He is authorised to receive all money on behalf of the society and issue receipts therefore, to operate bank accounts subject to the conditions laid down by the by-laws, and to pay all working expenses.
- 4) He also advises the managing committee on legal and other matters relating to tile society.

5) He performs all other duties concerning the society's work which may be assigned to him by the managing committee from time to time. For instance, the secretary may be required by the Managing Committee to conduct investigation on any matter and report on the findings thereof.

It should be noted that the secretary of a co-operative society is accountable for all his deeds to the managing committee and, therefore, he must convene the meetings of the managing committee after regular intervals so as to keep the members duly posted with the works of society.

Check Your Progress A

- 1. Which of the following statements are True and which are False?
 - i) The secretary of an association as the chief executive officer does not have to report to any other authority about his actions.
 - ii) The secretary of a club presides over the meeting of members.
 - iii) The secretary of a co-operative society should be well acquainted with office organisation and management.
 - iv) Only a member can be appointed as the secretary of a co-operative society, not an outsider.
 - v) The secretary of an association is the mouthpiece of the managing committee of the association.
- 2. Fill in the blanks selecting the appropriate words from those given within brackets:
 - i) The secretary of a club undertakes all and functions. (clerical, administrative, legal, supervisory).
 - ii) The secretary of an association is the of all properties of the association. (Caretaker, custodian, protector, user).
 - iii) The secretary of a co-operative society advises the managing committee on matters. (operational, legal, administrative).
 - iv) The bank account of a co-operative society is generally operated by its subject to the bye-laws. (President, Secretary, Manager).

19.4 SECRETARY OF A LOCAL BODY

Panchayats, Municipal Boards, Municipal Corporations and District Boards are known as local bodies. They are established in accordance with legislations of State Governments with a view to provide educational, social, medical and other civic amenities to the citizens of their respective areas. Under the provision of the statutes, each local body appoints a secretary who is a whole-time paid employee. He is one of the most important officials of the local body. He enjoys extensive powers, though he acts under the guidance and direction of the chairman of the body.

The secretary of a local body is essentially an executive officer who coordinates and supervises all office activities such as correspondence, maintenance of records, control over staff and accounts. He acts as a link between the authorities (Chairman or President) and the staff and outsiders. He is responsible for the preparation of the annual budget estimates, statements of accounts and annual reports of the local body

He also convenes the meetings and looks after all works connected with the meetings like issue of notice, preparation of agenda, recording the proceedings, drafting minutes, and helping the chairman in conducting the meetings. Later on, he oversees the implementation of decisions taken in such meetings.

He may also undertake special duties which may be entrusted to him by the local body as and when it thinks fit. Besides, he may have to tender advice on legal and administrative matters if called upon to do so by the chairman, or the Municipal board or Committee, or similar authorities.

19.5 SECRETARY OF A GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT

In India, under the administrative set up of government, the executive head of a department is known as Secretary. He is the top civil servant attached to a ministry of the government and is directly responsible to the minister incharge, e.g. Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Secretary to the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, etc. Depending upon the size of a Ministry or Department, besides the Secretary, there may be civil servants designated as Additional Secretary, Joint Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and Under Secretary, constituting the administrative hierarchy in the department or Ministry and carrying out various functions at different levels. In the organisation of the Central or State Government, the Secretary is usually a senior civil servant of the L.A.S. cadre, who heads the secretariat of the Ministry, qr department within a Ministry.

In some countries, the Minister is designated as Secretary. In the United States, for example, the political executives in the President's cabinet are known as Secretary of State, Secretary of the Treasury, and so on. They may be assisted by other political executives like Under-Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Special Secretaries. Permanent executives attached to the political executives are the Bureau Chiefs who are civil servants. In the U.K. Ministers are designated as Secretary of State, e.g. Secretary of State for Home Affairs, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Secretary of State for Defence, and others who constitute the Cabinet under the Prime Minister. Members of the Cabinet are political executives who may be assisted by other political executives designated as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State. The civil servants are permanent executives. They are designated as Under Secretary, Assistant Under-Secretary and Assistant Secretary.



19.5.1 Appointment

Secretaries of Government departments are generally appointed from among those who have been found qualified for such positions by the Union Public Service Commission and Public Service Commissions of different States. They have to successfully complete the requisite training and their postings are later based on seniority, service record and experience. Those who have been selected for All India Services are allotted to the Central and State Government Departments. They are also transferable from the Centre to the States and vice versa. Posting of secretaries in the Ministries and Departments of the Central Government are made by the Cabinet Secretary who heads the Cabinet Secretariat under the Prime Minister. Chief Secretary of the State Government, as head of the State Government Secretariat, makes the posting of secretaries in the State Government Ministries and Departments.

19.5.2 Administrative and Advisory Functions

The functions of the secretary of a government department can be described under two broad heads, viz.,

- a) Administrative and Executive Functions; and
- b) Advisory Functions.

a) Administrative and Executive Functions

- i) Overall control over day to day administration of the department with the assistance of subordinate officers.
- ii) Issue of directives, orders and circulars for the guidance of staff.
- iii) Execution of policies and decisions of the Minister or the Cabinet.
- iv) Attending meetings, conferences, and seminars concerning the department.
- v) Coordinating the activities of the department with those of allied departments.
- vi) Conducting and supervising investigation work relating to a proposal, scheme, or plan, and reporting on it to the Minister.
- vii) Supervising the collection and collection of data for policy making and decisions.

b) Advisory Functions

- i) Keeping the Minister informed about the working of the department.
- ii) Advising the Minister on the suitability of new proposals, schemes, plans, and projects.
- iii) Supplying all documents and information to the Minister which may be required by him at the session of Parliament or Assembly.

iv) Assisting the Minister to prepare the answers to the questions raised in the legislative body while In session.

Check Your Progress B

- 1. Fill in the blanks selecting appropriate words from those given within brackets:
- i) The secretary of a local body is an executive officer who and all office activities. (performs, supervises, directs, co-ordinates).
- ii) The secretary of a local body acts as a link between the chairman and (members, outsiders, staff, government).
- iii) The secretary of a Government department is directly responsible to the (Minister, Secretary of the legislative assembly, leader of the ruling party in the assembly).
- iv) Coordinating the activities of one Government department with those of allied departments is a function of (The Secretary, Minister, Chief Minister).
- 2. Which of the following statements are True and which are False?
 - The secretary of a Government department is appointed on the basis of seniority, service record and experience.
 - ii) It is the Accountant, not the Secretary of a local body, who prepares the annual budget estimates.
 - iii) Collection and collation of factual data for decision-making by the Minister are the responsibility of the chief of the statistical division, not that of the secretary of the department.
 - iv) The secretary of the department has to keep the Minister informed about the working of the department.

19.6 LET US SUM UP

Ordinarily the secretary of trade or professional association or club is appointed as a whole-time official to conduct the day to day activities of the organisation. Associations may appoint, nominate or elect an Honorary General Secretary from among the members. But a paid secretary is also appointed to undertake administrative functions. He performs the role of executive officer, agent and adviser of the managing committee. His functions include: recruitment and supervision of the office staff, correspondence, receipts and payments of money, maintaining accounts and arranging audit of accounts, registration of new members, collection of

subscription and donations, purchase of equipments, arranging parties and social meets, convening meetings, executing the decisions of the managing committee, and advising the committee on all administrative or legal matters.

Every Co-operative Society must have a Secretary as one of its office bearers. The secretary may be appointed from among the members or he can be an outsider. If the co-operative society is a large one, a whole-time paid secretary is generally appointed. The secretary is primarily an office executive but he also acts as an agent and adviser. He has to manage and supervise the routine office work as well as prepare statements and returns to be submitted to the Registrar of Co-operative Societies. He issues notices for meetings and makes all arrangements in that connection, records the proceedings and drafts the minutes. He acts as the agent and mouthpiece of the managing committee and is accountable for all his actions to the managing committee.

Local Bodies like Panchayats, Municipal Boards, Municipal Corporations and District Boards are pre established under State legislation, which provides for the appointment of a secretary. The secretary of a local body is a whole-time paid employee. He is the most important official and enjoys extensive powers though kc. acts under the guidance and direction of the chairman of the body. The secretary coordinates and supervises all office activities, prepares the annual budget estimates, statements of accounts and annual reports of the local body. He also convences all meetings, records the proceedings and drafts the minutes of meetings, besides undertaking special duties which may be entrusted to him by the local body.

The executive head of a Government department or Ministry in India is designated as Secretary. Me is the top civil servant attached to a Ministry and is directly responsible to the Minister in-charge Besides the Secretary, there may be other civil – servants designated as Additional Secretary, Joint Secretary, Deputy Secretary and Under Secretary constituting the administrative hierarchy in the department or Ministry to carry out various functions at different levels. In some countries, the Minister is designated as Secretary. 'The civil servants who are permanent executives are designated differently

In India, secretaries of government departments are appointed from among those who have been found qualified by the Union and State Public Service Commissions. Their postings are based on seniority, service record and experience. Posting of Secretaries of Central Government departments is made by the Cabinet Secretary, while the posting of Secretaries of State Government departments is made by the Chief Secretary of the State Government Secretariat.

The functions of the Secretary of 4 government departments include administrative and executive functions as well as advisory functions. A Secretary is required to maintain overall control over day to day

administration of the department, execute the policies of the Minister or the cabinet, attend meetings, conferences and seminars concerning his department, keep the Minister informed about the working of the department, advise the minister on the suitability of new schemes, plans and projects supply all comments which may be required by the Minister at the session of the legislature, and assist him in preparing answers to questions raised in the legislative body while in session.

19.7 KEYWORDS

Civil Servant: Permanent executive serving in a government department or Ministry.

Club: Voluntary association of persons box social, political, athletic, sports, or recreational ends.

Co-operative Society: A voluntary association of persons having common needs and interests, who come together for self-help and mutual aid.

Local Body: Elected body for local government g. Panchayat, District Board, Municipal Board, Municipal Committee, etc.

Professional Association: Association of people engaged in professional activity, e.g. lawyers, accountants, medical practitioners, etc.

Secretariat: Office of the secretary minister.

Trade Association: Association of traders and trading firms voluntarily established to protect and promote common interest of members.

19.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- A 1 i) False ii) False iii) True iv) False v) True
 - 2 i) administrative, supervisory ii) custodian iii) legal iv) secretary
- B 1 i) Supervises, co-ordinates ii) staff, outsiders iii) minister
 - iv) the secretary v) secretary
- C 2 i) True ii) False iii) False iv) True

19.9 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1) What is the status of the secretary of a trade or professional association? What functions does he perform?
- 2) Enumerate the functions and duties of the secretary of a co-operative society. Discuss with special reference to his functions relating to meetings.
- 3) The secretary of a local body is the most important official. Describe the role of the secretary of a local body as office executive.

- 4) Who is eligible to be appointed as secretary of a government department? Briefly explain the administrative and executive functions of the secretary of a government department.
- 5) How is the secretary of a government department appointed? Discuss his functions as an executive and an advisor.

Note: These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.



IGHOUS THE PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY

UNIT 20 GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF MEETINGS

Structure

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- 20.1 Introduction
- 20.2 What is a Meeting?
- 20.3 Classification of Meetings
- 20.4 Requisites of a Valid Meeting
- 20.5 Rules Governing Meetings
- 20.6 Preparation for and Conduct of Meetings
 - 20.6.1 Notice
 - 20.6.2 Agenda
 - 20.6.3 Role of Secretary
 - 20.6.4 Quorum
 - 20.6.5 Role of Chairman: His Powers and Duties
- 20.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 20.8 Keywords
- 20.9 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 20.10 Terminal Questions

20.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- define a meeting and classify meetings;
- state the requisites of a valid meeting;
- enumerate the rules governing meetings;
- describe the preparation for, and conduct of meetings;
- explain the importance of notice, agenda and quorum;
- describe the role of a secretary in the preparation for meetings; and
- explain the role of the chairman of a meeting specifying his powers and duties.

20.1 INTRODUCTION

In a democratic system, the functioning of any association of person, be it a business or social organisation or any other type of association, makes it necessary that members should meet periodically to take decisions on matters of common interest. In large organisations, meetings of managers and

executives are frequently held to discuss the ways and means of resolving problems as well as coordinating various activities. Periodical meetings of governing boards or managing committees are also required for decision-making, control and coordination of operations. In all types of organisations, one of the most important duties of the secretary relates to arranging for and conduct of meetings, record of proceedings and drafting of minutes. In this Unit, we shall examine some of the general principles to be kept in view with respect to meetings, the requisites of a valid meeting, rules governing meetings, preparation for meetings, the role of chairman in the conduct of meetings, his powers and duties.

20.2 WHAT IS A MEETING?

Generally speaking, a meeting may be referred to as a gathering of two or more persons for mutual interaction, discussion, legislation, etc. The purpose of a meeting may be an exchange of ideas, or discussion of a common problem, a decision on a program of action, or formulation of policies acceptable to the majority, or frame. rules, or pass laws (as in the case of legislative bodies) and the lie. In a specific sense, a meeting may be defined as the gathering or assembly or coming together of two or more persons for the transaction of any lawful business of common interest.

20.3 CLASSIFICATION OF MEETINGS

Meetings can be classified under two broad heads, viz. (1) Public Meetings, and (2) Private Meetings. Private meetings may be further classified into two types: (i) General Meetings, - and (ii) Committee or Subcommittee Meetings. General Meetings may either be Annual General Meeting or Special/Extra-Ordinary General Meeting. These all are depicted in Figure 20.1.

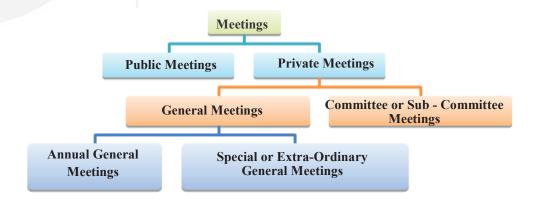


Figure 20.1: Classification of Meetings

Now, let us discuss these one by one.

1. Public Meetings: Public meetings are those which are attended by members of the public. For such a meeting, general invitation may be published in newspapers or displayed in posters or/and distributed as

leaflets. Everyone has a right to attend public meetings unless the right of admission is otherwise restricted. The purpose of these meetings is usually to disseminate information, or impart knowledge, or create public opinion for a cause, belief, or some matters of general interest. Public meetings may be held to raise money, increase membership, arouse public interest, make spiritual or material appeal, or to educate the people. Such meetings may be held in a big auditorium to accommodate a large number of people, or in open grounds or public parks.

2. Private Meetings: Private meetings are those to which admission is restricted only to the: members of an association or society. These include meetings of companies, trade unions, clubs, and similar other organized bodies. These meetings are held to transact the lawful businesses of the respective organizations. It is, however, essential that a private meeting should be held on private premises and not in a public place.

Private meetings may be further classified as:

i) General Meetings: General Meetings are called to discuss matters of common interest to the members of an organisation. Every member of a company or an association has a right to receive the notice of such meetings and to attend the same accordingly.

Generally, such meetings are held once a year in which case they are called **Annual General Meetings**. The usual business transacted at the Annual General Meeting include:

- 1. Electing members of the Board of Directors of a company, or of Managing Committee, and such other office bearers of an Association as may be provided in the bye laws.
- 2. Consideration of the Auditor's Report and passing the accounts of the previous year.
- 3. Appointing the Auditors for the next year and fixing their remuneration.
- 4. Consideration and approval of the report submitted by-the Board of Directors of a company, or by the Managing Committee in the other cases.
- 5. Preparing the budget for the ensuing year; if so required under the respective bye laws.
- 6. Considering any other business of common interest.

Any general meeting of a company or society other than an Annual General Meeting is called a Special or Extraordinary General Meeting. This meeting is called when any business in hand is to be transacted immediately and cannot be kept pending until the annual general meeting. A Special General Meeting may be called at any time by a resolution of the Board, or the Managing Committee, or on receipt of a



requisition from the members as per the bye laws. These meetings are usually called to make alteration in the Memorandum or in the Articles or Bye Laws, or for removal of a Director or any statutory officer of the organisation.

ii) Committee Meetings: A company is managed by the Board of Directors whose members are elected from amongst the general body of shareholders. Other associations are managed by an Executive Committee or a Governing Body or a Managing Committee, whose members are elected as per their respective laws. The meetings of such committees are called Committee Meetings. The executive or Managing Committee Meetings are held from time to time to frame policies as per guidance given in the general body meeting and to take various decisions relating to the aims and objectives of the association.

All matters relating to admission or suspension of members, recruitment transfer, promotion and retirement of staff, loans, purchases, maintenance of accounts, moveable and immovable properties of the association etc. are considered in committee meetings and necessary decisions are taken herein. These meetings are attended only by the members of the Managing Committee but other persons can also be invited to give expert advice and opinion on particular matters.

When certain matters need deeper study or further enquiry before a decision can be taken by the Managing Committee, a sub-committee consisting of two or more members of the Managing Committee is appointed. This sub-committee may also be authorized to co-opt more members if that is required to carry out its functions. Similarly, the Board of Directors of a company may appoint a sub-committee to consider some special matters.

A sub-committee has to work within the terms of reference given at the time of its appointment. A convener of the sub-committee is also appointed who convenes the meeting according to the convenience of members, records the proceedings and finally prepares a report which is signed by all the members. This report is submitted to the Managing Committee or Board of Directors which appoints the sub-committee and not to the general body. However, if a general body of the association appoints a committee or sub-committee, then the report of findings of the committee is submitted to the chairman of the association.

20.4 REQUISITES OF A VALID MEETING

In any organisation meetings are held to discuss and transact important matters related to the objectives of the organisation. Over the years certain essential requirements of a valid meeting have been evolved so as to give legal hacking and respectability to the decisions taken in the meetings. These requisites can be described as follows:

- 1. The meeting must be convened properly by the person or authority duly authorized to do so.
- 2. A proper notice should be sent, as per the law, to all those persons who are entitled to attend the meeting and/or to vote at the meeting, otherwise, the proceedings of the meeting will be invalid. Public meetings are convened through advertisements in newspapers, by posters, or by notices displayed in a prominent place. Individual notice in such cases is neither necessary nor possible also.
- 3. The meeting must be lawful. It must be held at a lawful place that is a place not prohibited by any law, for a lawful purpose that is not against public policy or interest and must not disturb public peace and order.
- 4. The meeting must have a quorum prescribed according to its rules and regulations. Quorum means attendance of a minimum number of authorized persons for valid transactions of business. Where no quorum is prescribed, presumably, at least two persons must be present, (as it is impossible for one person to constitute a meeting). The quorum must not only be present in the beginning but must be maintained throughout the period of the meeting. However, Quorum is not necessary for any public meeting.
- 5. The meeting must always be presided over by a chairman. The chairman, in the case of a public meeting, is appointed by the conveners or by those who are present. In the case of registered bodies, the chairman is appointed according to their respective rules and regulations.
- 6. Proceedings of the meeting must be regulated according to the law governing the particular meeting.
- 7. Proper record of the proceedings at the meeting must be kept. The minutes of the proceedings should be duly written, signed and confirmed in accordance with established provisions.

20.5 RULES GOVERNING MEETINGS

One of the requisites of a valid meeting is that it must be properly conducted. All meetings are, therefore, governed by a set of rules. In the case of statutory bodies like the Parliament (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha), State legislative assemblies, joint stock companies, co-operative societies, municipalities, etc., rules are separately framed and prescribed for meetings. The Rules governing the meetings of Parliament are known as Standing Orders; for local bodies and registered societies the rules are laid down in the by-laws; in the law of a joint stock company, the rules are laid down in its Articles of Association. In the case of non-statutory bodies or associations, rules may be framed as deemed proper by the promoters or founders. Provision is also there for amendment of the rules for meetings according to a yet procedure. If rules are not framed, meetings of such bodies are expected to be governed by custom and convention.

The points to be kept in view regarding rules governing meetings are as follows:

- 1. If rules are laid down under any Act (e.g. Companies Act, Co-operative Societies Act etc.) the same must be followed without exception.
- 2. If the society or association has framed its own rules for conduct of meetings, those are to be followed unless there is any conflict with rules prescribed under law.
- 3. If rules are not prescribed under law nor framed by the association, why are so primary and established by convention should govern the conduct of meetings.
- 4. Finally, in the absence of even custom or convention being known, members present at a meeting may decide upon the rules to be followed. If that is not possible, the chairman may decide what rules would be followed.

Check Your Progress A

3.

Def	ine a Meeting.
	THE PEOPLE'S
Wh	ich of the following statements are True, and which are False?
1.	A public meeting can be attended only by those who have actually read the notice in newspapers or in posters or handbills, not by anyone who has heard about it from another.
2.	Private meetings must be held in private premises.
3.	Auditors are appointed to committee meetings.
4.	Members of the managing Committee are elected in General Meetings.
5.	A sub-committee meeting needs to be convened by the Chairman.
Fill	in the blanks selecting appropriate word(s) given within brackets:
i)	A meeting will be valid only if it is held for a purpose. (genuine, lawful, official)
ii)	Individual notice is not necessary in the case of meeting. (general, public, private)

iii) A meeting must have the requisite _____ which implies the

	attendance of a minimum number of persons out of those mivited to
	it (signatures, quorum, seating arrangement)
iv)	A Sub-committee may be authorised to additional members. (elect, nominate, co-opt)
v)	If rules for conduct of meetings are not prescribed under law or byelaws, rules should be followed. (standard, customary, reasonable)

20.6 PREPARATION FOR AND CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

To be well organised, a meeting needs advanced preparations which have to be undertaken by the secretary or any other person responsible for calling the meeting. Any slip in the preparation for a meeting is bound to result in confusion or disturbance. All the formalities regarding notice, agenda, and other matters should be complied with as prescribed under the rules.

Before taking up the steps required for the preparation of a meeting, it may be useful to discuss in detail the meaning, significance, and requirement of the terms 'Notice' and 'Agenda'.

20.6.1 Notice

Notice of a meeting is an invitation to the members to attend it on the specified day, time, and place as well as an intimation of the business to be transacted. For constituting a valid meeting, proper notice calling the meeting should be sent to all those persons who are entitled to attend the meeting. If proper notice is not given, the proceedings of the meeting will not be valid.

The notice of a meeting must be definite, absolute, unconditional and not subject to any eventuality or otherwise qualified in any manner except when the law permits it. A notice must be explicit, free from ambiguity and reasonably intelligible to the recipients. The main points to be considered at the time of issuing a notice are:

Form of notice: Notice of a public meeting is usually given by an advertisement in the newspapers or by posters and leaflets. For private meetings, whether general or committee meetings, a written notice should be sent to all those entitled to attend the meeting. This may further be supplemented by advertising in the newspapers if it is a general meeting like the Annual General Meeting of a company or any other registered body. For small sub-committee meetings, oral notice may serve the purpose. However, it is always preferable that a written notice is issued.

The mode of communicating the notice is usually prescribed in the Rules and Regulations of the organisation. If not, a written notice must be sent by post which may be followed by a telephonic check to ascertain the consent and to make arrangements accordingly.



Sometimes when meetings are held regularly at an agreed time and place, the practice of sending a notice on each occasion may not be followed, and only agenda papers may be sent. But due notice is always obligatory and, therefore, must be strictly adhered to so that future disputes may be avoided.

Contents of a notice: A notice convening a meeting must clearly state the date, time, place and business of the meeting. The time and place must be reasonably convenient to members to attend the meeting. What is specified in the by- laws, should be strictly followed.

If some special business is to be transacted in the meeting, it should be clearly indicated. Supporting statements or reports must also be sent along with the notice, if it is so required under the rules, otherwise it will invalidate the meeting. A notice should also include a declaration such as the closure of Share Transfer Books, and references to any point of law or Article, the right of a member to appoint a proxy, as may be required by the law.

Length of time of a notice: Usually, bye-laws of the organisation stipulate a minimum period of notice for certain meetings. When notice is given, some more time beyond the minimum period may be allowed so that members at distance could make necessary arrangements and attend the meeting. Sometimes, the rules provide that "a number of CLEAR DAYS notice" should be given. In that case, the day of giving the notice and the day of holding the meeting must be excluded. Thus, if 21 clear days' notice is required and the meeting is scheduled to be held on the 23rd day of the month, notice must be mailed no later than the first day of the month. Even where there is no special mention in the bye-laws, the expression "day" usually means "clear days". Sometimes, the period of notice may be allowed to be reduced in the manner prescribed.

A committee or subcommittee meeting may be held at a short notice in case of emergency. The day and time of the next meeting may also be fixed at regular intervals, e.g. every second Friday of the month, or it may be determined at the conclusion of each meeting. However, it is advisable that reasonable opportunity should be provided in all cases to everyone entitled to attend a meeting.

Who should issue the notice: In the case of meetings of registered bodies, the chairman may also convene a meeting under his signature. For company meetings, the secretary issues the notice under the order of the Board of Directors. In the case of committee or subcommittee meetings, the convener, if any, issues the notice. In his absence, the chairman can do so.

Whom to issue notice: In the case of a registered body, persons to whom notice is to be given will be determined by the Articles of Association or by some other law like the Indian Companies Act. For instance, a notice of an Annual General Meeting of a company must be sent to the auditors of the company as well as all the members at their registered addresses or to their legal representatives, if informed earlier. Serving a notice is not necessary in

case a member is living in a foreign country or whose whereabouts are not known. Any intentional omission to give notice to any member entitled would invalidate the meeting, but an accidental omission would not have that effect.

Means of communication of a notice: For all meetings, notice should be served only through the prescribed means as given in the by laws and not other modes should be adopted. When service by post is stipulated, it should be correctly addressed and there should be some proof of posting, like Certificate of Posting, or Registered Post at Receipt.

Notice must always be despatched to the registered address unless a separate mailing address is specifically given in writing, which should be accordingly used

A telephonic message or a verbal notice may be delivered personally but it must be confirmed by a written notice.

Notice of a public meeting can be given through an advertisement and the date of service would be deemed to be the day on which the advertisement appears.

Notice of an adjourned meeting: A properly convened meeting may be adjourned due to want of quorum, if the rules so provide. An adjourned meeting is usually held next week at the same time and peace for which no fresh notice needs to be given to the members. However, if the meeting is adjourned sine die, that is, indefinitely, a fresh notice must be given but no new business can be transacted unless notice of such new business is given.

Withdrawal of a notice: Once notice of a meeting has been issued, it cannot be withdrawn unless the rules so provided. The meeting must be held on the appointed day though can be adjourned by passing a resolution, to a more convenient date. But, if not authorized, the convener of a meeting of a registered body cannot postpone it. Where it is proved that due notice was not given to one and all, the meeting can be cancelled and a fresh meeting will be convened.

Rectification of an irregular notice: An irregular notice can be subsequently ratified, that is approved as a valid notice, by an appropriate authority. For instance, when a notice for a Board meeting has been issued by a secretary without being authorised to do so, it can be ratified by all the directors.

Waiver: A notice is given to convene a meeting to transact some specified business only. But if all the members unanimously agree, they can waive the formality of issuing a notice and transact other business also. However, care should be taken that everyone concerned is present and has given his consent in the meeting.

Invalid notice: Notice of every meeting must be given in a proper form, at a proper time, and in a proper manner as prescribed in the rules or by-laws.



Wherever any error of omission or commission is committed in this regard, it will invalidate the notice. However, if all the members are present and none objects to the informality, want of proper notice may be excused and the proceedings cannot be held invalid later on due to that reason.

Specimen of Notice of an Annual General Meeting of a Club The Health Sports Club 2 Canning Lane New Delhi

Notice is hereby given that the 4th Annual General Meeting of the Members of the Club will be held at the Club premises at 2, Canning Lane, New Delhi, on Saturday, the 8th May 1993, at 3-00 P.M. to transact the following business:

- 1. To receive, consider and adopt the Auditor's Report and the audited accounts for the year ended 31st March, 1993.
- 2. To elect the Office bearers and Members of the Executive Committee.
- 3. To appoint Auditors and to fix their remuneration.

A.G. Khan Secretary

Delhi.

April 15, 1993.

20.6.2 Agenda

Agenda means what things to be done. In relation to meetings, it is used to indicate the items of business to be transacted. It is the programme, listed on a paper, which gives the details of matters to be discussed and decided upon at a meeting in the serial order. However, if the chairman of the meeting-detains it fit and necessary, he can deviate from the serial order also if there is sufficient reason for doing so.

The purpose of the agenda is to inform members about the items to be discussed in the meeting. Thus, it gives members an opportunity to think in advance about the business to be transacted and also to prepare themselves with all relevant information for a meaningful discussion. It helps the chairman to note the importance of maws and to decide how much he should be devoted for each item. Finally, the items on the agenda form the basis of drafting the-minutes of the proceedings of the meeting.

Agenda of meeting constitutes an essential part of the notice, and is usually sent along with it. If it is not sent with the notice, the words "agenda will follow" may be written in the notice and later on detailed agenda along with the supporting documents, if any, may be sent sufficiently before the meeting is held.

Preparation of Agenda: It is the responsibility of the secretary to prepare the agenda in consultation with the chairman. It should be prepared much before the date of the meeting so that it could be circulated among the members well on time. As far as possible, the agenda should be brief and exact and should contain a relevant reference to the context of the matters to be discussed. It is also desirable that for similar kinds of meetings uniformity of form and method and style should be followed for the preparation of the agenda wherever possible, sufficient space must be left on the right-hand side of each copy of the agenda to write notes during the progress of the meeting. This practice is very useful for the chairman and the secretary as they are invariably required to take notes of the points to be incorporated in the proceedings of the meeting.

There are two types of items that are listed on the agenda paper:

- 1. Routine Items: Routine items as well as those on which little debate is needed are written first in the agenda and they are also dealt with earlier. The secretary does not need to have a consultation with the chairman to include the routine agenda items, like:
 - Election of Chairman
 - Reading out the notice of convening the meeting.
 - Reading out the minutes of the previous meeting, confirmation and signing thereof.
 - Chairman's Speech.
 - Any other routine item.
- 2. Special Items: Special items of agenda consist of those items which do not arise in a routine manner or regularly in the agenda. Similarly, there are certain items on which a detailed & bate is expected. For inclusion of all these items of business, the secretary should consult the chairman. In order to preserve impartiality, he should include, on request of any member, any matter which can be regarded reasonably proper for discussion at the meeting.

The secretary should inanimate a file wherein he should enter all those matters which could be included in the agenda of the next meeting. He may also invite members' suggestions regarding any matter which any of them may want to include, though the question of inclusion is decided by the appropriate authority.

It is advisable that the words 'Private and Confidential' should be written on the envelope, if the secretary is to send the proposed items of agenda to be typed to the chairman for his consent and approval before its final circulation.

Sometimes, the exact text of resolution to be moved is given in the agenda In that event, the agenda may become voluminous. For instance, it happens in the case of the agenda of the Annual General Meeting of the Federation of

Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry. It may be useful if an index of resolutions is attached to the agenda in such cases.

Loophole Agendum: In most cases, an 'open item reading "Any other business" is included as the last item of the agenda. This enables any major item to be discussed if it is within the scope of the meeting. However, special items of Importance should always be included as a separate item of the regular agenda as they cannot be discussed under the heading 'Any other business'

Specimen of a Notice and Agenda of a Meeting of Board of Directors of a Company MOTHER CARE (INDIA) LTD.

35, Faiz Road New Delhi - 110006.

June 16, 1993

To Mr. A.W.Raja, 530. Charidni Chowk, Delhi - 110006.

Dear Sir,

This is to inform you that the next meeting of the Board of Directors will be held at the Registered Office of the Company on Wednesday, July 7,1993 at 11.30 A.M. to transact the following business. You are requested to be present.

Agenda:

- 1. To read and approve the minutes of the last Board Meeting.
- 2. To consider applications for transfer of shares.
- 3. To consider appointment of the Manager of Kanpur Office.
- 4. To approve the list of accounts for payments.
- 5. To fix the list of accounts for payments.
- 6. Any other matter with the permission of the chair.

Yours faithfully, Secretary

20.6.3 Role of Secretary

Secretarial preparations are the essential component for the success of any meeting. Usually such secretarial preparations include the following aspects:

1. The secretary should maintain a current tile for meetings and keep all the relevant papers and references in the same.

- He should check and manage all important matters to be on the agenda
 for discussion at the meeting. In this connection, you should consult your
 superiors, especially the chairman. In other words, you should prepare
 the tentative agenda and ultimately get it approved by the concerned
 authority.
- 3. The secretary should finalise the date, time and place of the meeting in consultation with the chairman. In this connection, provisions of the byelaws, if any, must be taken into account.
- 4. The secretary should finalise the notice and the agenda to convene the meeting and arrange for the dispatch of the notice in the manner prescribed in the bye-laws.
- 5. He should take necessary steps for hiring a hall for the meeting, if accommodation is not sufficient in the organisation's own premises. He should keep in mind the expected attendance of members as well as the number of guests if they are to be invited.

The meeting room or meeting hall should be properly furnished. Seating and lighting arrangements should be satisfactory and speaking and hearing arrangements are to be available at the time of meeting. Arrangements for refreshments, drinking water, etc, must be made beforehand and the secretary should ensure that everyone is properly served.

- 6. He should appoint trained assistants and stewards to receive the invitees and record their attendance. They should politely check the entry cards, if entry is restricted.
- 7. Necessary arrangements should be made to receive, check, verify and count the proxies, if allowed under the bye-laws. A record of the proxies must be available before the meeting commences.
- 8. The secretary should check the arrangements for recording the proceedings. Necessary stationery by way of papers, pencils, ink etc. should be available to the members who wish to take notes or prepare briefs during the meeting.
- 9. Copies of the Chairman's Speech, reports and statements, etc., which are to be circulated among the members, must be prepared in advance for circulation. These may be handed over at the time of members entry into the meeting hall, or distributed after the members have taken their seats.
- 10. The secretary should ensure that the Minutes Book, Attendance Register, legal documents, correspondence files, or other material related to the agenda items and likely to be required for reference, are readily available in the meeting.
- 11. Preparations lo as certain the sense of the meeting should be made by the secretary. Necessary arrangements for poll and ballot, ~f required, must be made.



Specimen of	Check List	t of Preparations	s for the Board	of Directors	meeting t	o be	held
Specimen or	CHUCK LIST	i ui i i chai amum	s ioi tiit boai u	or Directors	miccume t	טע טע	11010

	Items	Check when done
		Check when done
1.	To send notice	
2.	To prepare agenda	
3.	To make arrangements for meeting hail	
4.	To appoint assistants and stewards.	
5.	To order for refreshments.	
6.	To provide stationery - papers, pencils, ink etc	
7.	To prepare material for circulation of the meeting.	
8.	To prepare Minutes, reports, statements to be presented at the meeting	
9.	To keep handy copies or Rules and Regulations.	
10.	To arrange for attendance.	
11.	To arrange to receive arid scrutinise proxies, if so required	
12.	To make arrangement for poll or ballot, if so required	
13.	To make arrangements for checking statutory books and	
	documents, if necessary.	
14.	To arrange recording of proceedings	

Check Your Progress B

1.	Define 'Notice'.
2.	What is the meaning of the term ' Agenda'?

- 3. Which of the following statements are True and which are False?
 - i) For general and committee meetings, written notice must be sent to all those entitled to attend the meeting.
 - ii) It is necessary to give 21 clear days notice for every meeting.

- iii) It is not necessary to issue a fresh notice for a meeting adjourned sine die.
- iv) Agenda must always be a part of the notice of meeting and dispatched at the same tune.
- v) Confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting is a routine item of agenda.
- vi) The only purpose of the agenda is to help the Chairman to decide on the time to be developed for each item.

Fill in the blanks selecting appropriate word(s) from those given within

- bracket

 i) Election of Chairman is a _____ item of agenda.

 (Special, routine, ordinary)
 - ii) The Secretary should finalise the date and time of meeting in consultation with the ______. (office manager, chairman, junior director)
 - iii) If a proper notice is not given, the ______ of the meeting will be invalid. (discussion, decisions, proceedings)
 - iv) A notice convening a meeting must clearly state the date, time, place and ______ of the meeting. (duration, nature, business)
 - v) Serving notice of a meeting is _____ in the case of members living abroad. (necessary, not necessary, essential, not essential)

20.6.4 Quorum

After convening a meeting through proper notice, the most important prerequisite for the conduct of my meeting is the existence of quorum. According to G.H. Stanford, "Quorum is the minimum number of members of a body required to assemble to establish legal competence for transaction of business". Thus, it is the general principle of the law of meetings that no business can be transacted unless a quorum is present any business transacted without quorum is automatically invalid.

The quorum should not only be present before the commencement of the meeting but it should continue to be there-throughout the meeting and till it ends. However, it may be provided in the bye-laws that if the quorum is complete at the beginning of the meeting and if some members withdraw causing the quorum to fall while the proceedings as on, it will not invalidate the meeting. Notwithstanding this provision, it is safer to draw the attention of the chairman if and when the quorum falls short while the proceedings of the meeting are continuing. The chairman, on this point of order, should take a count of members present and adjourn the meeting in case the quorum falls short.

What is the minimum number: The number of persons forming a quorum

depends upon the size of the body and, thus, no general rule can be laid down in this regard. The bye-laws of the organisation generally lay down the quorum, in the absence of which the meeting will not be properly constituted. If no quorum is fixed, the best opinion over the subject is that a majority of the recorded members shall constitute a quorum.

The question may arise whether one person can constitute a lawful quorum. Ordinarily no. There must be at least two persons to constitute the quorum of a meeting of any registered body and, thus, two by the minimum number for a quorum. However, one person can constitute a meeting and fulfil the requirement of a quorum under the following circumstances:

- 1. Where one person holds the total shares of a certain class then we can validly constitute a meeting of that class of shareholders.
- 2. Where one creditor has lodged a proof of fact in a winding up, he can constitute a valid quorum in the creditors' meeting.
- 3. Where there is a committee of one, a meeting can be held by that one person.
- 4. Where the directors resolve that the quorum be one in a directors meeting, it will be considered valid.
- 5. Where a meeting is called under instructions from the Central Government or a Court and the instructions also specifically state that even one member of the company present in person or by proxy shall be deemed to constitute a meeting.

Computing Quorum: While counting the number of persons forming a quorum, only those attending members who can vote should be connected. An auditor, attending a meeting as an invitee but not allowed to vote on any agenda item, will not form a part of the quorum. Similarly, proxies should be excluded unless otherwise expressly allowed under the bye-laws. Also, in the case of a joint holder of a share, only the first person entitled to vote will be counted while the second or third one, though present, will be excluded.

Consequences where there is no quorum: In the absence of a quorum, no business can be transacted in a meeting. If it is done, it will render the meeting invalid. It is sometimes provided in the bye-laws that latitude of fifteen minutes to half an hour can be given from the commencement of the meeting to complete the quorum. But in case it still falls short then the chairman will adjourn the meeting forthwith and announce the One and place where it will be reconvened. The members present may, however, carry out informal discussion without passing any resolution for implementation.

In the case of companies and other registered bodies, adjourned meetings are usually held at the same time and place after a week. The formality of quorum is not required in such adjourned meetings.

20.6.5 Role of Chairman: His Powers and Duties

A chairman is the person, male or female, who presides over the meeting. When the chairman is a lady, she is addressed as chairperson. The chairman acts as the conductor of the meeting and therefore, the success or failure of a meeting greatly depends upon his skill, experience and competence. He leads the group to arrive at correct decisions without wasting time. He performs his functions with absolute impartiality and integrity. He enforces all the prescribed rules and regulations, bye-laws and standing orders for regulating the proceedings at the meeting. He is also the @rector and arbiter of the proceedings.

Appointment of the Chairman: The Rules and Regulations of registered bodies usually lay down the rules governing the appointment or election of the chairman of a meeting. The chairman of the organisation, if present, automatically presides over its meetings ex-officio. In his absence, the seniormost member or any other member from among and by those present, is elected to conduct the proceedings of that meeting only.

Where, however, a regular chairman is to be elected, an interim chairman may be appointed to conduct the meeting. He would invite nominations and, if needed, elections will be held. The elected chairman will then conduct the proceedings.

In public meetings, the chairman is usually invited by the conveners to preside. In the case of companies, the terms of an appointed or elected chairman is mentioned in the Articles. But, if it is not specified, it does not follow that he has been appointed for life or for so long as he remains a director. If the Articles are silent, which is not very likely, any member, elected by the meeting, may be chairman thereof. If the appointment of a chairman is in order, he should, on taking the chair, briefly thank the meeting for the honour and trust conferred upon him.

Powers of the Chairman: A chairman usually derives his authority from the meeting over which he presides. However, many legal decisions, customs and established practices have also &tined the powers of a chairman. Let us examine, the operational implications of these powers

- 1. To conduct meetings: The chairman has the authority to maintain order and decorum in the meeting. He has the power to conduct the meeting strictly according to the bye-laws, and, in the process, he can stop introduction of irrelevant matters, and restrain any misuse of procedure. He can even stop a speaker using improper and unparliamentary language and order expunging of such remarks.
- 2. To confirm minutes: Ordinarily, a Chairman has to confirm the minutes of the previous meeting in the subsequent meeting. However, the byelaws may also provide that the minutes should first be signed by the chairman of the meeting so as to certify their correct recording and then



- they can be confirmed in a subsequent meeting by the chairman of that meeting. The chairman also has the authority to subscribe or attest other documents, such as extracts from the Minutes Book, resolutions, etc.
- 3. To decide points of order: Points of orders may be raised by any member attending the meeting if some member speaks anything irrelevant to the motion or if there is no quorum present. The chairman has the power to take up the matter raised through the point of order and give his ruling, if so required, whether the point of order raised is or is not tenable. His ruling cannot ordinarily be challenged unless it is grossly incorrect. If, however, the ruling is challenged by an overwhelming majority, the issue may be decided by vote.
- **4. To expel disorderly members:** The chairman can ask any member present in the meeting to go out because of his disorderly behaviour or continuously disturbing the proceedings of the meeting. However, he first gives a warning to the person concerned to behave properly and if the latter persists in misbehaving, the order to expel or to eject may be given.
- 5. To decide the priority of speakers: Every member should first take the permission of the chairman before he speaks. But when more than one member rises to speak at the same time, the chairman has to decide as to who should speak first and then allow them to speak one by one.
- **6.** To stop discussion on a matter: The chairman has the power to stop discussion on any motion if he thinks that the discussion is dragging, or it has been going on for a long time and every speaker is repeating the same point, or where there is an attempt on the part of some members to prolong the discussion to avoid a motion to be put to vote.
- 7. To order poll: Poll is a method of voting which helps ascertain the sense of a meeting. Members can cast their votes orally or in writing. When the discussion on a motion is on and there seems to be no unanimity of opinion among the members, the chairman, on his own, can order to take poll, or he can do so on demand by the requisite number of persons. In the latter case, the chairman is bound to order the poll. In case a poll is ordered by the chairman, he may himself act as the scrutineer, or appoint someone else to conduct the poll according to the prescribed procedure.
- **8.** To exercise the casting vote: Like any member, a chairman has a right to cast his vote in the event of a poll. In that case it is known as a "Chairman's Vote" or a "Deliberative Vote". But the Rules and Regulations of a registered body usually empower the chairman the right to cast an extra vote, known as Casting Vote, if there is an equality of votes on any issue. He may or may not exercise this right. The chairman should cast this vote very judiciously and only to serve the best interests of the organisation.

- **9.** To declare the result of the voting: The chairman has the power to declare whether a resolution is carried or not, and when he does so, it is conclusive evidence of the number of votes cast for or against the resolution.
- **10. To reject a decision:** The chairman is a protector of law. He has power to reject all unlawful decisions even if taken by a majority of members. For instance, a resolution for payment of dividend at a rate higher than the one recommended by the Board of Directors is unlawful and, therefore, can be rejected by the chairman of the company. Similarly, where three-fourth majority is required to pass special resolution, and the same is carried only by a simple majority, the chairman can exercise this power.
- **11. To adjourn a meeting:** The chairman has the power to adjourn a meeting provided that:
 - i) The meeting has become disorderly.
 - ii) The attendance falls short of the quorum.
 - iii) If the majority of members decide to take up the remaining item of the agenda in the next meeting

Duties of the Chairman: The chairman of a meeting is required to ensure that the proceedings of the meeting, for the beginning to the end, are conducted according to the provisions of law and established practices. He should thus, discharge the following duties:

- **1. Appointment as Chairman:** The chairman should check and confirm that his appointment as chairman of the meeting is in order.
- **2. Duly Convene the meeting:** He should see that the meeting has been duly convened and notice and agenda have been sent to all the members entitled to attend. He should check that the notice has been issued by the appropriate authority and that there is no dispute about time and place of the meeting.
- **3. Quorum:** Before the proceedings start, the chairman must be certain whether the required quorum is present. He should ensure that only persons entitled to vote are included for determining quorum. He should also ensure that the quorum is present throughout the meeting.
- **4. To confirm minutes:** The chairman has the duty to confirm the minutes of the last meeting and put his signature on the Minute Book to this effect if there are no objections from the members present. He should also examine the relevant documents like copies of special resolutions, balance sheet, and extracts of other statements.
- 5. Order of Business according to agenda: The chairman should see that the items on the agenda are discussed in the serial order set down in the

agenda. He can, however, vary the order if members agree.

- 6. To maintain order: One of the foremost duties of the chairman is to see that order is maintained at the meeting. Improper behaviours, embarrassing statements or untoward incidents should not be allowed by the chairman. He should use his skill and fact to handle undesirable situations and should see to it that all business is transacted in an orderly manner without bad feelings being generated in the meeting. If the meeting becomes disorderly and is unmanageable the chairman must stop further proceedings and adjourn the meeting.
- **7. Members to address chairman:** The chairman should insist that every speaker addresses him and there is no argument between the members inter se.
- **8. No discussion unless there is specification:** He should ensure that motions are moved in a positive and appropriate manner. They should also be duly seconded. No discussion is to be allowed unless there is a specific motion before the meeting. Motions not falling within the scope of the meeting or badly drafted should not be allowed to be moved.
- 9. To give equal opportunity to all to speak: Another important duty of the chairman is to see that all the speakers are given equal opportunity to express their view on a motion. He should specially protect the interest of any opposition or minority group, if it exists, allow its representative to give his views, and give him a patient hearing. But he should not allow anybody to obstruct the proceedings on whimsical grounds.
- 10. To decide orders of priority for members to speak: In Case two or more speakers wish lo simultaneously, the chairman should follow the principle of priority and take down their names in the order in which they call his attention and then allow them to speak accordingly.
- 11. To allow mover of motion to reply to debate: The chairman should allow adequate time to the mover of the motion to reply to the debate. It is the mover of the motion only who has a fight to speak twice, other members should be allowed speaks once only.
- **12. To give ruling on Points of Order:** The chairman should give his ruling over points of and other emergent questions. He may consult Some senior or knowledgeable persons before giving his ruling. But once this is given he must stick to it.
- 13. To ascertain the sense of the meeting properly: The chairman should see that the sense of the meeting is ascertained properly before deciding to close the motion or putting the motion to vote. He should try to bring unanimity among the members as far as possible. But in the case of sharp differences he should finally put the motion to vote. He should take care of all procedural requirements in conducting the poll like ensuring validity of proxies, scrutiny of ballots, casting of vote, and declaring the

result of polling.

14. To see that proper minutes are maintained: Finally the chairman has to see that proper record is maintained of the decisions taken at the marketing. In other words, the chairman should see that proper minutes are kept which he may sign if authorised by the meeting.

Check Your Progress C

- 1. Which of the following statements are True and which are False?
 - i) No business can be transacted in a meeting unless a minimum number of persons entitled to attend the meeting is present.
 - ii) A single person can never fulfil the requirement of quorum.
 - iii) While computing the quorum both members present and proxies should be invariably counted.
 - iv) The formality of quorum is not required in an adjourned meeting.
 - v) The chairman of every meeting must always be elected by the members present.
 - vi) The chairman's ruling on a point of order cannot ordinarily be challenged.
 - vii) The chairman can adjourn a meeting time he likes without giving any reason.
 - viii) The chairman has to confirm the minutes at the end of the meeting he has prattled over.
 - ix) The members of the minority group in a meeting should be allowed more time to speak than other members.
 - x) The chairman must allow the mover of a motion adequate time to reply to the debate.
- 2. Fill in the blanks; selecting appropriate word(s) from those given within brackets:

i)	There must be at	least	persons 1	to	constitute	a	quorum	in
	any meeting of a registered b	ody.	(two, thre	ee,	five)			

- ii) 'Members present can have ______ discussion even if there is no quorum in a meeting. (brief, informal, unimportant)
- iii) The chairman should provide all relevant facts for objective discussion without ______. (hesitation, reservation, bias)
- iv) A chairman orders a poll on a motion if there is no _____ of opinion among members. (balance, similarity, unanimity)
- v) The business of a meeting must be conducted by the Chairman without varying the _____ in the agenda. (matters, items, order of business)

20.7 LET US SUM UP

A meeting is defined as the gathering, assembly or coming together of two or more persons, for the transaction of any lawful business of common interest, discussion, legislation, etc.

Meetings can be classified under two broad heads, viz., Public Meetings and private Meetings. Private meetings are of two types: General meeting and Committee or Sub-committee meetings. General meetings may either be Annual General Meeting or Special/Extraordinary Meeting.

For a public meeting, general invitation may be published in newspapers or displayed in posters and/or distributed as leaflets. Everyone has a right to attend a public meeting. Private meetings are those to which admission is restricted to the members of an association or society. These include meetings of companies, clubs, trade unions and similar organisations.

General meetings are called to discuss matters of common interest to the members of an organisation. Committee meetings include meetings of the Board of Directors of a company, Executive Committee meetings of other types of associations. Sub-committees may be appointed by the Managing Executive Committee consisting of two or three members and meetings of sub-committees may be held to carry out a closer study or enquiry of matters referred to by the Managing Executive Committee.

A meeting to be valid must have been duly convened by issuing a proper notice with agenda; it must be held at a lawful place for a lawful purpose; must have the prescribed quorum; its proceedings must be regulated according to provisions of law or bye-laws; and the same must be duly written, signed and confirmed. Rules governing meetings are separately prescribed in laws or bye-laws for statutory bodies, and framed by the promoters or founders of non-statutory bodies.

The notice to be issued for any meeting should confirm proper form and content. It should clearly state the date, time, place and business of the meeting. It must be issued before a minimum period of time before the date of the meeting as per rules or convention. It may be signed by the Secretary, Chairman or Convener of the meeting depending upon the type of meeting, Usually notices are served by post with the proof of posting kept on record. Agenda of the meeting constitutes an essential part of the notice. The secretary should prepare the agenda in consultation with the Chairman.

Two types of items are listed on the agenda: Routine items and special items. There is also an 'open item' reading 'Any Other Business' which enables minor items to be discussed.

The Secretary is responsible for making necessary preparations for a meeting, which include preparation and issue of notice and agenda, making satisfactory seating and lighting arrangement, providing drinking water and



refreshments, recording attendance of members through assistants, checking proxies, record of proceedings, distributing circular, statements, report?, etc, to the members, and arrangements for poll and ballot, if necessary.

Existence of quorum is the foremost prerequisite in the conduct of meetings. Quorum should be present at the commencement of the meetings and continue throughout the period of meetings. The bye-laws generally lay down the minimum number which would constitute the quorum. The quorum should be determined by counting only the members present and entitled to vote. No business can be transacted in the absence of quorum.

The chairman of a meeting acts as its conductor and leads the members to arrive at correct decisions. The Rules and Regulations of a registered body generally lay down the manner in which the chairman is to be appointed or elected. In the absence of chairman of the organisation, the senior-most member or any other member can be elected to conduct the proceedings of a meeting. The chairman has power to conduct the meeting, cont-3-m the minutes, decide on the points of order and priority of speakers, order poll, exercise casting vote, expel disorderly members, adjourn the meeting if necessary, and declare the results of voting. The duties to be discharged by a chairman are: to see that the meeting has been duly convened, ascertain whether quorum is present, to confirm minutes of the previous meeting, to ensure that the order of business is according to the agenda, to prevent disorderly situations, to give equal opportunity to members, including minority representatives, to speak to ensure that discussion takes place on the basis of specific motions; to see that the sense of meeting is ascertained properly; to follow the principle of priority and allow members to speak accordingly; to see that proper record is maintained of the proceedings of the meeting and proper minutes are kept.

20.8 KEYWORDS

Adjourned Meeting: A meeting discontinued with the object of resuming it on a future date.

Agenda: Items of business to be transacted at a meeting.

Bye-laws: Rules governing meetings of a registered society or local Authority.

Casting Vote: Extra vote of chairman which he has power to cast when there is equality of votes of members and against a motion.

Chairman: A person who presides over a meeting.

Committee Meeting: Meeting of Board of Directors or Managing/Executive Committee of an organisation.

General Meeting: A meeting of all members of the Organisation.

Meeting: A gathering, assembly or corning together of two or more persons for transacting any lawful business of common interest.

Motion: A question or definite proposal submitted at a meeting for consideration.

Notice of Meeting: Invitation to attend a meeting at a specified place, on a specified date and time.

Point of Order: A question raised during a meeting regarding any irregularity in the proceedings like absence of quorum.

Private Meeting: A meeting to which admission is restricted to the members of a society or organisation.

Public Meeting: A meeting which can be attended by members of the public.

Proxy: A person authorised by a member to attend a meeting on his behalf and cast vote.

Quorum: Minimum number of members required to constitute a valid meeting.

20.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

A	2	i) False	ii) True	iii)False	iv) True	v) False
	3	i) Lawful	ii) Public	iii)Quorum	iv) Co-opt	v) Customary
В	3	i) True	ii) False	iii) False	iv) False	v) True
	4	i) Routine	ii) Chairman	iii) Decision	iv) Business	v) Not Necessary
C	1 2	i) Truevi) Truei) Two	ii) False vii) False ii) Informal	iii)False viii) False iii)Bias	iv) True ix) False iv) Unanimity	v) False x) True v) Order of business

20.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1) Define a meeting. What are the requisites of a valid meeting? Distinguish between (i) Public meeting and (ii) Private meeting.
- 2) What is meant by 'Notice'? State the points which should be kept in view before issuing notice of a meeting.
- 3) Define the term quorum and explain what constitutes a quorum. What steps should a chairman take if quorum is absent or not maintained throughout the meeting?
- 4) What do you understand by the term agenda? List out the routine items of an agenda. What are special agenda items? Give two examples.
- 5) Define the term 'casting vote'. How does it differ from the regular vote? Who has the right to exercise casting vote and when?
- 6) What are the circumstances in which a chairman can adjourn the

meeting? Is it essential to issue a fresh notice for an adjourned meeting?

- 7) "The success or failure of a meeting depends on its chairman." Elucidate the statement with special reference to the powers and duties of the chairman of a meeting.
- 8) Write explanatory notes on the following:
 - i) Point of Order
 - ii) Order on business
 - iii) Committee meeting
 - iv) Communication of Notice
 - v) Ratification and waiver of notice
 - vi) Open agenda
- 9) What rules should a chairman enforce to ensure smooth and orderly conduct of a meeting? Discuss.
- 10) Draft the form of notice and usual items of agenda of the Annual General Meeting of a Club.
- 11) Discuss the role of a secretary in connection with the preparations for a general meeting.
- 12) How can a secretary ensure that he has taken care of his duties regarding a proposed meeting?
- 13) What is the minimum number required for the quorum? How is the Quorum computed? Who determines the quorum? What are the consequences if there is no quorum?
- 14) Who should issue the notice of a meeting and to whom? How should it be served? Distinguish between rectification of an irregular notice and waiver. Can a notice be withdrawn?
- 15) What are the items included in the meeting of a registered body?

Note: These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.



UNIT 21 CONDUCT OF MEETING

Structure

- 21.0 Objectives
- 21.1 Introduction
- 21.2 Rules Governing Discussion and Debate in Meetings
- 21.3 Order of Business
- 21.4 Motions, Amendments and Resolutions
 - 21.4.1 Motions
 - 21.4.2 Amendments
 - 21.4.3 Resolutions
 - 21.4.4 Interruptions
- 21.5 Voting Procedures and Methods
 - 21.5.1 Methods of Voting
 - 21.5.2 General Rules for Voting
- 21.6 Minutes of Meetings
 - 21.6.1 Meaning and Importance
 - 21.6.2 Drafting of Minutes
 - 21.6.3 Circulation of Minutes
 - 21.6.4 Confirmation of Minutes
- 21.7 Secretary Duties
 - 21.7.1 Duties before the Meeting
 - 21.7.2 Duties during the Meeting
 - 21.7.3 Duties after the Meeting
- 21.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 21.9 Keywords
- 21.10 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 21.11 Terminal Questions

21.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- enumerate the rules governing discussion and debate in meetings;
- state the order of business at a meeting;
- describe the procedure for moving a motion;
- explain various kinds of motions;
- outline the rules for dealing with amendments;
- describe the modes of interruption in course of debates;
- explain different voting procedures and methods;

- state what is meant by privileges in speech and the kinds of privileges that may be allowed;
- describe the process of drafting, circulation and confirmation of minutes; and
- state the duties of a secretary before, during and after meetings.

21.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, we have discussed the requisites of a valid meeting, rules governing meeting, preparations to be made for holding a meeting etc. In this unit, you will study the general principles of meetings relating to debate and discussion, order of business, motions, amendments, resolutions, voting procedures and methods to ascertain the sense of meetings, privilege in speech, minutes and proceedings, their drafting, circulation and confirmation, and secretary's duties in connection with meetings.

21.2 RULES GOVERNING DISCUSSION AND DEBATE IN MEETINGS

There are some general rules governing the discussion and debate in meetings. These rules are based on established practices, customs and conventions. Sometimes, the bye-laws or the Articles also prescribe some specific requirements and the chairman should ensure that these provisions are complied with.

The general rules may be outlined as follows:

- 1. After it is ensured that the meeting is properly convened and duly constituted, the meeting should be called to order by the chairman and the item of the agenda then taken up one by one.
- 2. The business of the meeting should be conducted in the sari:- order as set out on the agenda unless changed with the consent of minutes present.
- 3. The routine items of the agenda including confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising out of the minutes should be first disposed of.
- 4. Other items on the agenda should then be taken up for discussion based on motions i.e. definite proposals submitted to the meeting for consideration.
- 5. Motions and amendments should be in writing and signed by the mover and the seconder.
- 6. Discussion should be confined to the motion or amendments before the meeting and should be relevant to the matter being debated.
- 7. No discussion should be allowed without a formal motion or amendment before the meeting.

- 8. The chairman should allow only one speaker at a time and he should also determine the order of speakers.
- 9. All speakers should address the chair only: A speaker should stop speaking if and when the chairman rises to speak. He can resume his speech with the permission of the chair after the latter stops and sits down.
- 10. A member should be allowed to speak on the formal motion or on amendments thereof only.
- 11. As far as possible one person should be allowed to speak once only except the mover of the motion who should be allowed also to reply to the debate.
- 12. Any motion, once introduced, cannot be withdrawn without the consent of the meeting.
- 13. During the discussion, points of order may be raised by any member and the chairman should give his ruling on them which will be binding on all.
- 14. After the discussion is over, the motion should be put to vote, if it is so required. In case of unanimity, there is no need to call for polling.

21.3 ORDER OF BUSINESS

The agenda of the meeting contains the order of business to be transacted in the meeting. The chairman should see to it that all the items are taken up one by one in the same order unless the meeting decides to deviate. Ordinarily, the agenda item are set in the following order:

- 1. Reading the notice to convene the meeting.
- 2. Noting apologies for absences.
- 3. Reading motions of condolences and congratulations.
- 4. Confirming minutes of the previous meeting.
- 5. Discussion on matters arising out of the minutes of the previous meeting.
- 6. Taking the items of the agenda
- 7. Taking any other item not listed in the agenda with the permission of the chair.
- 8. Closing of the meeting.

Then, the subsequent procedure follows as listed below:

1. After going through the preliminaries like checking the validity of the meeting, quorum, etc., the chairman will call the meeting to order. He will ask the secretary to read the notice to convene the meeting. This is a formal announcement to ensure and record that a proper notice has been given and the meeting is duly constituted.

- 2. After this the secretary will read out the apologies for absence received from any member or an invitee.
- 3. The motion of condolence regarding the death of any member or any other important person will then be put by the chairman or he will ask the secretary to do so. Similarly, if the meeting wishes to record members' appreciation of the distinctions or achievements of any person, a congratulatory motion will be put before the house. All such motions are duly recorded in the minutes and the copies of the same are sent to the concerned persons.
- 4. The chairman will then ask the secretary to read out the minutes of the last meeting. However, if the minutes have already been circulated among members, they should be taken as read. If certain objections regarding the correctness of the minutes are received then they will be taken up for discussion and, if necessary, corrections will be made in the records. All alterations in the minutes must be initiated by the chairman and the secretary. The chairman will then put the motion before the house by saying, "if the members agree the minutes should be confirmed." If passed by the house, he will confirm the minutes by putting his signature just after the recorded minutes.
- 5. It is possible that some items of the previous agenda needed reports or statements. Some items the members may ask to what action has been taken on the resolutions passed in the last meeting. In all such cases the chairman, the secretary, or any other concerned member will present the report or convey the necessary information. Similarly, any unfinished item of the last agenda which could not be taken up due to lack of quorum or want of time or any other reason, will now be discussed and gone through.
- 6. After this, new items of the agenda will be taken up one after another. Usually, the agenda is so drawn that routine or non controversial items on which no lengthy discussion is expected, are put first, so that minimum time is spent in going through them. But, there is no such legal compulsion. Further, the items on the agenda depended on the type of the meeting also. For instance, if it is a Statutory Meeting of a Company, matters relating to Statutory Report, Statutory Accounts, legal requirements for incorporation, etc., will be put and discussed. If it is an Annual General Meeting of any registered body, items such as Chairman's Reports, adoption of the Audited Accounts, election of new office bearers or directors, appointment of auditor, and disbursement of profits, will be taken up. If it is an Extra-Ordinary General Meeting then only the item for which the meeting has been called will be discussed. However, all decisions Liken in a meeting must be duly recorded by the secretary in the manner and style they are passed.



After all the items listed in the agenda are over, the chairman should ask the secretary whether there is any other item which came up after the issue of agenda but needs immediate attention and decision. If so, the secretary will present the same one by one. Any member present in the meeting can also raise such matters which may be taken up with the permission of the chair.

Finally, a vote of thanks will be proposed and seconded by the members and the chairman shall announce the closure of the meeting.

If certain items of the agenda remain unfinished due to any reason, the chairman, with the consent of the members, will adjourn the meeting and also announce the date, tune and place and the next meeting. No discussion is permitted on such adjournment motions.

21.4 MOTIONS, AMENDMENTS AND RESOLUTIONS

The primary function of every meeting is that of translating the business on the agenda and arriving at decisions based on the deliberation of members present. This involves consideration of motions or proposals, relating to the items on the agenda, made by members debate and discussion on the motion and amendments that may be proposed, and finally the motion along with the amendments, if any, being voted upon as formal resolutions.

The rules and procedures relating to motions, amendments and resolutions are explained in the following sections.

21.4.1 Motions

A motion signifies a proposition or proposal on any item of business submitted to the meeting for consideration and decision. In other words, a motion may be regarded as a proposed resolution which may be altered or amended if so desired by the members, before it is put to vote.

The following conditions must be satisfied for a motion to be valid:

- 1. A motion should ordinarily be put in writing, dated and signed by the mover. However, if permitted by the chairman, verbally placed before the meeting for discussion, but before its final adoption as a resolution, it should formally drown in black and white.
- 2. A motion should also be duly seconded by some other member. When the chairman of the meeting himself moves a motion, it need not be seconded.
- 3. A motion must be within the scope of the meeting and relevant to the business on the agenda.
- 4. It should be in the positive or affirmative form though in some cases, the motion may be negative in form e.g., "That the question be not now put."
- 5. It should begin with the word "That".

- 6. It should be constructed in such a way that it can be formally adopted as resolution.
- 7. It should be clear and unambiguous.
- 8. It should not contain any argument, interference or any defamatory expression.
- 9. The motions should be moved in the order of business set out on the agenda.
- 10. All motions are to be handed over to the chairman of the meeting unless the rules prescribe that motions have to be sent by a certain date to the secretary. In the latter case, it should be done accordingly.
- 11. No formal notice of a motion on procedural matters is necessary. Moreover, motions are not required to be sent for the following purposes:
 - i) Appointment or election of the chairman.
 - ii) Changing the order of items of the agenda.
 - iii) Rectification of typing errors, if any.
 - iv) Motion for condolence or congratulations.
 - v) Motion for the adjournment or closure of the meeting.
 - vi) Motion for adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting or the accounts.
 - vii) Vote of thanks to the chair.

Withdrawal of a Motion

The mover of a motion has the right to speak on the motion. He can also withdraw a motion before it is put to vote with the consent of the meeting. Once it is put to vote, it cannot be withdrawn.

Procedure for Moving a Motion

If a notice of motion has already been given, the chairman asks the mover to formally move his motion. In the absence of notice, the proposer of the motion may arise and, with the permission of the chairman, formally introduce the motion. If the bye-laws require, the motion must be seconded immediately. Otherwise, the chairman may allow the mover to speak for a while and can afterward ask for seconding of the motion. If seconded, further discussion on the motion is allowed. If not, the motion is grounded.

After adequate discussion including my discussion on amendments, the motion is put to vote and members can vote for or against it or be neutral. The result is ascertained by counting of the votes and is declared by the chairman. If the motion is passed, it becomes the resolution of the meeting.

It should be noted that if the chairman thinks that any unscrupulous group is trying to push a motion through illegitimate means, or where the motion is



not relevant to the business of the motion, he may rule out the motion. But he should exercise this power very judiciously and without any bias or prejudice to any member.

21.4.2 Amendments

An amendment is an alteration proposed in the terms of a motion. Any member can propose an edition, commission or substitution of words, figures, names or any other terms on the original motion before it is put to vote. An amendment is not intended to be a substitute for the original motion, but only qualifies the latter. Moreover, an amendment to a motion should not be confused with an amendment of law or of a resolution in force. Amendments to the original motion can be brought about in the following manner

- 1. By adding certain words to the original motion, e.g., "that the words 'exclusive of all allowance' be added after the words Rs. 5,0001"
- 2. By omitting certain words in the original motion, e.g., "that the words 'leasing' may be omitted".
- 3. By substituting certain words in the original motion e.g.. "that the word 'should be' substituted by 'must be'.
- 4. By inserting certain words in the original motion, e.g. "That the words 'University of Delhi' should also be inserted after the name of the college".
- 5. By changing the position of some words.

General Rules Regarding Amendments

There are certain basic rules which should usually be adhered to while dealing with amendments. They are as follows:

- 1. An amendment should relate to the main motion and should not negate it or introduce a new topic.
- 2. It should not be obstructive or dilatory to the proceedings. It should be introduced with the intention of amending the original motion only.
- 3. An amendment should be in writing, affirmative in form and duly seconded.
- 4. It should be moved and seconded by persons who ha e nor spoken on the man motion.
- 5. The mover of an amendment has nor right of speech again to give a reply
- 6. Any member of amendment can be moved to in original motion.
- 7. An amendment can be introduced only before the motion is put to vote.
- 8. Once an amendment is accepted by the chairman for discussion, it cannot

be drawn except with the consent of the meeting.

- 9. Amendment gets precedence over original motion as far as voting is concerned.
- 10. If an amendment is carried it is incorporated in the original motion. If it is lost discussion on the original motion is resumed.
- 11. If the original motion is withdrawn, all amendments to it fall through

Procedure for Handling Amendments

When an amendment is moved to an original motion and the chairman accepts the same, discussion on the original motion is stopped. Now the discussion on the amendment takes place. Only those persons who have not spoken on the main motion, are allowed to speak. After sufficient discussion, the chairman puts the amendments to vote. If it is carried, it is incorporated in the main motion; if defeated, discussion on original motion is revived.

All amendments to the same motion should be taken up one by one and, at any time, only one amendment should be under discussion. It should be noted that if an amendment is passed by voting, it does not mean that the main motion is accepted. It is, therefore, necessary that a fully amended motion should be put to vote again for its acceptance or rejection by the meeting.

Amendment to an Amendment

When a proposition is made to amend or alter an amendment to original motion, it is known as **amendment to an amendment**. Here, the purpose is to omit, substitute, insert, or add certain words, figures or terms in the amendment only and should not introduce a new topic to the same.

As soon as an amendment to an amendment is moved and the chairman accepts the same, it should be discussed first and then voted. If passed, it is incorporated in the amendment and, if later, the amendment is also passed it finds a place in the main motion which now becomes a substantive motion. But, if an amendment to an amendment is defeated, it will lapse and the discussion on amendment revives; or if the original motion is withdrawn, the amendment to an amendment automatically lapses.

21.4.3 Resolutions

A resolution is a motion that has been carried by the majority of the persons present and voting in the meeting. It expresses the formal will or opinion of the meeting. Thus, if a motion is the beginning, a resolution is the end of a matter put before the meeting. Once a motion turns into a resolution, it becomes binding on the body including the disagreeing minority, provided the resolution is lawful and is not contrary to the rules of the body concerned.

A resolution once adopted cannot be amended or withdrawn except by passing a repealing resolution in the subsequent meeting. A resolution



concludes the discussion on an agenda item and indicates that the next business on the agenda should be taken up.

A resolution should be so drafted that there is no ambiguity or vagueness. It should be clear, exact and stated in the affirmative. Usually, the words "Resolved that" precede the main part of the resolution. Sometimes, a brief explanation is given earlier and then the main resolution starts with these words.

Specimen of resolutions of a sports club:

- 1) "Resolved: That a sub-committee with the Secretary as a convener, be appointed by the chairman to organise a Football Tournament on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the club."
- 2) "Resolved: That the audited Annual Accounts for 1992-93 and the Auditor's report thereon be, and are hereby, adopted."

The resolutions passed in a general body meeting can be either ordinary resolution or special resolution subject to the Dye-laws of the organisation.

The resolutions passed in a meeting should be duly recorded in the minute book in the same form as it is a permanent record of the decisions taken at the meeting. They should also be tiled with the Registrar or any other appropriate authority, if so required under the relevant law.

Check Your Progress A

- 1. State whether the following statements are True or False.
 - i) Discussion on agenda items should start as soon as the meeting is called to order by the chairman.
 - ii) All speakers at a meeting should address the chairman even when the debate is on.
 - iii) Discussion on matters arising out of the minutes of the previous meeting takes place after confirmation of the minutes.
 - iv) The order of business set out in the agenda cannot be altered even if members attending the meeting want it.
 - v) A motion may be verbally moved for discussion or put in writing and sent to the chairman.
 - vi) Every member must vow for or against a motion when it is put to vote.
 - vii) A member can move a motion only with the chairman's permission. withdrawn under any circumstances.
- 2. Fill in the blanks selecting appropriate word(s) from those given within brackets:
 - i) A resolution expresses the formal of the meeting

		(desire/opinion/intention)	Conduct of Meeting
	ii)	A motion once introduced cannot be withdrawn except with the consent of (the chairman/all member)	
	iii)	Formal notice of a motion is not required to be given in the case of matter. (minor/procedure/personal)	
	iv)	When a motion is voted upon and passed, it becomes a (decision/resolution/general opinion).	
	v)	The mover of an amendment have the right to reply. (does not/does/must)	
3.	Def	fine the term 'motion'.	
4.		at is a substantive motion?	
21	.4.4	Interruptions	

Sometimes when a debate on a motion is in progress, some member interrupts the same with a view to seek clarification, alternation or shelving further discussion. It is known as interruption of debate. There are various customary ways to do so in a proper and formal manner. But the chairman should be cautious enough to realise whether any interruption will serve a useful purpose, or it is an effort on the part of the member to take undue advantage of the situation.

Debates may be interrupted for different purposes which are usually the following:

- Amendments 1.
- 2. Point of Order
- 3. The Closure
- **Previous Question** 4.
- 5. **Next Business**

- 6. A Question lying on the table
- 7. Adjournments
- 8. Postponement

Amendments: Amendments are suggested alterations in the main motion. Any member can rise, with the permission of the chairman, and interrupt the debate by proposing an amendment. After its introduction, discussion on the main motion is suspended till the amendment is disposed of. Similar procedure is followed in the case of amendments to amendments.

Point of Order: A point of order is interruption to draw the chairman's attention to an irregularity of procedure or some other point. It can be raised by any member at any moment during a meeting when anything is done or proposed to be done which is contrary to the general rules and procedures relating to the conduct of the meeting, For instance, point of order may be raised in any of the following situations.

- i) On the absence of quorum: If at any time during the conduct of a meeting, the number of persons present is short of quorum, as required under the bye-laws of lhe association, the attention of the chairman may be a point of order.
- ii) On a motion: If a motion or an amendment to a motion is not within the scope of the meeting, a point of order may be raised by my member.
- iii) On breach of standing order or rules: where the organisation has standing orders or rules regarding the procedure or conduct of a meeting, and whet: the same is not being adhered to, any member can draw the attention of the chairman by raising a point of order. For instance, where a motion, needing a proper seconding, is king discussed without having been seconded.
- iv) On use of abusive language or misbehaviour: If any speaker uses objectionable language or misbehaves with any other person present in the meeting, any member may appeal to the chairman to prevent him from doing so by raising a point of order.
- v) On procedural formalities: If the chairman overlooks to take action on an infringement of rules or irregularity, on whispering during the discussion, on holding private conversation loudly, or indulging in any activity which disturbs proper conduct of the meeting, any member can raise a point of order for the chairman to exercise his authority.

A point of order should be raised immediately as and when an irregularity is observed. It may also be raised when any member is speaking. It is always addressed to the chairman by saying "Mr. Chairman, may I draw your attention to a point or order" On raising the point of order, the speaker will sit down, and the chairman will allow a short discussion on the point raised. But if the chairman feels any irregularity in the point of order

Conduct of Meeting

itself, he may disallow it by giving his ruling. The chairman's ruling is not to be put to vote. It is final and cannot ordinarily be challenged unless it is grossly incorrect or obviously contradictory to the rules and regulations. He may, however, consult other members or officials before giving his ruling. When a point of order is settled, the speaker who is interrupted may resume his speech.

Unnecessary points of order raised to obstruct the conduct of a meeting should be strictly discouraged by the chairman as they waste time and spoil decorum.

The Closure: When enough discussion has taken place it is not feasible to prolong it any more on a certain motion, a closure motion may be moved. Any member may rise and move "that the question be now out." This motion is known as a "Closure" or "Gag". This need not be seconded unless my byelaws so provide. If the motion is carried, discussion on the original motion is stopped and it is immediately put to vote. If the closure motion is lost discussion on the main motion is resumed.

The chairman has discretionary powers to reject a closure motion if he thinks that more discussion on the motion would be useful, or where it is being used unfairly by the majority to impose their will on the minority.

Previous Questions: Any member who has not already spoken on the main motion may move a previous question motion with a view to prevent a vote being taken on the main motion or to shelve it. The member rises and moves "that the question be not now put." If seconded, it is put to vote at once. If the motion is carried, the original motion is dropped and no further action is taken on it at that meeting. But if it is defeated, the original motion is put to vote without further discussion. No amendment can be made to a previous question motion.

There is an important drawback in the previous question motion. If it is defeated, the original motion is put to vote immediately, thus, it may be used by unscrupulous members as an obstructive tactic. If the motion is carried, discussion on the man motion stops automatically. It cannot be resumed again m that meeting and a reasonable time should elapse before the question can be revived. The chairman, therefore, should exercise some discretion to avoid such a situation in the best interest of the organisation.

Next Business: Other than the previous question motion, this is another way of shelving discussion on a motion in hand. When a motion "that the meeting now proceeds to the next business" is moved and duly seconded. If the 'next business' motion is carried, the original motion is dropped at once, and the next item of the agenda is considered. If the 'next business' motion is lost, discussion on the original motion is revived, but after a specified time limit, the 'next business' motion can again be moved. The 'next business' motion may be brought before the house even when an amendment to the main motion is being discussed. The object of next business motion is to prevent a



decision to be taken on the: motion or to drop the matter due to frivolous or undesirable nature of the motion.

A Question Lying on the Table: This is a motion which, when moved and seconded, takes priority over the business in hand. The motion is not debatable. If it is carried, the man - 1 motion is postponed till the members vote to take it up from the table. It differs from the next business motion in the sense that it can be taken up again at any time either at the same or at a future meeting.

Adjournment: Adjournment means postponement with the object of resuming in future. Thus the Adjournment can be of i) a discussion, and ii) a meeting.

- i) Adjournment of a discussion: A debate on a particular motion may be postponed if it is felt that some more information is needed or more time is required for consideration to come to a sound decision. A motion may be moved and seconded to this effect specifying the time and date of resumption. If the motion is carried, the debate on the original motion is stopped until the time specified. If the motion falls, the original motion is revived.
- **ii)** Adjournment of a meeting: Adjournment of a meeting is an act of discontinuing 1 meeting with the object of resuming it at a later date. The meeting can be postponed for a specified time or sine die, i.e., for an indefinite period. Ordinarily, no notice is necessary for the adjourned meeting but if the rules so specify or the members agree then notice specifying the date, time and place may be issued.

The motion of adjournment may be used in the following circumstances;

- i) Due to want of quorum
- ii) Due to disorder
- iii) For taking poll
- iv) On demand of members

Where the specified quorum for a meeting is not present, the chairman, on his own or on the indication of a member, may move the motion to adjourn the meeting. The chairman can also adjourn a meeting if he finds it uncontrollable on account of disorderly behaviour of members, or if he finds that the meeting is not in a mood or position to carry on the business. On the insistence of the majority of members present, the chairman is bound to accept the motion to adjourn the meeting to a future date. Separate notice may not be issued if the adjourned meeting is decided to be held after a specified period.

However, if it is not possible to determine outright when it will be convenient to reassemble the meeting may be adjourned sine die with a view to reconvening it at the most appropriate time to be decided later a notice of the same will be accordingly given.

Interruption on account of adjournment have serious consequences. Therefore, it is desirable that bye-laws regarding power of adjournment, notice of adjourned meeting, inclusion of new agenda, etc. should be explicitly provided.

Postponement: If a meeting has been properly convened, it cannot be postponed or cancelled by a subsequent notice unless allowed by tile byelaws. A meeting can be postponed to a future date if the circumstances create such a situation as to make it inconvenient to hold the meeting. However, the better course in such a situation will be to hold the meeting and then adjourn it to a future date. In such a case it is advisable to issue a new notice specifying the date, time and place of the adjournment meeting.

If a meeting is not properly convened then it cannot be held at all. It has to be cancelled. The members will have to be informed through a fresh notice. The procedure for adjournment or postponement will not apply in such a case.

The distinction between a postponed meeting and an adjourned meeting is that the former signifies that the meeting has not yet taken place while the latter is a continuation of a meeting held but adjourned.

21.5 VOTING PROCEDURES AND METHODS

Every motion which is introduced and debated in a meeting should reach its logical conclusion i.e., either carried or fall. To determine fate, the chairman of the meeting seeks the opinion of the house. This IS known as ascertaining the sense of the meeting. As the mind of a majority of members makes the sense of the house by acclamation, that is by clapping of hands or cheering, it is not advisable to adopt this method in formal meetings. The lung power of an enthusiastic minority may show a different result because of the different majority. However, this process can be adopted in case of formal motions Like a vote of thanks to the chairman, or appointment of an official, etc. For all serious and important businesses, a proper system of voting should be adopted.

21.5.1 Methods of Voting

There are several ways in which votes for and against a motion may be recorded. Some of the common methods are the following:

- 1. Voice vote
- 2. Show of Hands
- 3. Standing Vote
- 4. Division
- 5. Ballot
- 6. Poll



Now let us discuss them one by one.

Voice Note: This method of voting is generally adopted in legislative bodies. It involves indication of the members approval or otherwise by saying 'Aye' (for the motion) or 'No' (against the motion) as and when the chairman invites opinion. The Chairman compares the volume of sound of the two responses and declares the result by saying. "The 'Ayes' or 'Noes' have it" as the case may be. However, this method of voting is not preferred as it does not permit exact counting of votes in favour and against.

Show of hands: In meetings, voting by show of hand is adopted to determine the sense of the house. After the debate on a motion is over, the chairman puts the motion to vote by first requesting those who are in favour of the motion to raise their hands. The 'teller' then counts the hands and reports to the chairman. Later, those who are against the motion, raise their hands and their count is also given to the chairman. Finally, the chairman declares the result. He need not give the details of votes for or against the motion. However, where the show of hands is clear enough to reveal a great difference he should declare the result immediately. In case of equal votes, the chairman may exercise the casting vote either way. But, if he does not use the casting vote, the motion is lost. Proxy cannot be used here as the voting has to be done by show of hands only.

Standing vote: In the case of voting by show of hands in a large gathering, there is a possibility that some members may raise both hands and create confusion. To avoid this possibility standing vote is preferable. The chairman requests the members voting in favour of the motion to stand if where they are sitting and their number is counted. If the majority opinion is apparent from those standing, count out may he dispensed with unless otherwise necessitated by the provisions of bye-laws. In that case, those who are against the motion also stand up and are counted. In the standing vote system, no secrecy is possible. Similarly, no proxy can be used. Further, it involves much time and effort, creates a lot of noise and causes inconvenience to the member as well as to the teller.

Division: Under this method, when the motion is put to vote, the chairman asks the members to form themselves into two groups -one favouring the motion and the other against the motion. They may assemble in two different sides of the meeting hall or go to two different rooms. 'The teller counts the number of members of each group and conveys the result to the chairman who then announces the same.

In this method a clear picture of persons favouring a motion or otherwise is seen and no secrecy is maintained. Also, proxy is not possible. The method is not only time consuming but also disturbs the whole sitting arrangement.

Ballot: When the issue before the house is important and there are apparent differences of opinion among the members who do not wish to disclose their voting preference, they may ask the chairman to determine the sense of the

house by ballot. If the rules so provide, the chairman asks the secretary to distribute a piece of paper of equal size to each member present. They express their opinion by writing 'yes' or 'no'. If the members have to elect a person out of two or more candidates and their names are known much before the voting is to be held, the names are printed on the ballot paper in alphabetical order. Each voter gets a ballot paper and puts a prescribed cross mark (x) or tick mark ($\sqrt{}$) against the name he elects. He then puts the ballot in a sealed box. Finally, the ballot papers are collected and the votes are counted.

The merit of this method is that the members can record their opinions without undue influences by others. If the number of votes is large, the task of recording the votes becomes time consuming. Moreover, the rejection of invalid votes is often challenged and counts disputes.

Poll: This is a voting method whereby each member with a voting right may deliver his vote to an appointed officer, either orally or in writing. Generally members are supplied with Rolling papers. Each member puts down his signature on the rolling paper after writing the number of votes he can cast on his own (in the case of a company, each member has voted for every share held by him and he can cast all the votes at a poll either in person or by proxy). The rolling papers are collected by the appointed officer and details are entered on a sheet called point list. The chairman appoints scrutineers to examine the proxies, count the votes and report the result to him.

Where the number of voters is very large and votes of proxies are to be counted, polling is the only satisfactory method of ascertaining the majority opinion. A poll may be conducted under the following circumstances:

- i) Where the members are not satisfied with the result of a show of hands, they can demand an immediate poll, as per the bye-laws.
- ii) The rules demand that a poll will be taken on any or all important issues listed in the agenda.
- iii) If the rules do not prohibit, the chairman himself may decide on a poll if he deems it necessary.

The poll may be demanded by a member when he is not convinced with the result of voting by show of hands. In that case, the result from the show of hands is ignored and the poll is taken immediately or on a later date. There can be objections to a poll if it is allowed by the chairman without first trying to show off hands.

Generally, the standing orders or bye-laws prescribe the procedure of taking a poll and it is the duty of the chairman to follow the same. The polling procedure should also be explained to each member.

The advantage of taking a poll are as follows:

1. The sense of meeting can be ascertained with greater accuracy.



- 2. Where the number of voters is very large, all can take part.
- 3. Absentee members can cast their votes through proxies, if the bye-laws so permit.
- 4. Where proxies are allowed, the voting reflects the shareholding strength.

A serious limitation in the polling method appears when a minority group acquires a large number of proxies of disinterested absentee members. Further, it is a time consuming method of finding the opinion of members.

It may be noted that proxy is a written authorisation given to a person to vote on behalf of the voter. The person so authorised to act and vote on behalf of another is also called a proxy. It is discussed in detail in Unit 6 (Section 6.4.4).

21.5.2 General Rules for Voting

The procedure of voting to be followed is generally provided in the bye-laws or Rules and Regulations of the association. In the absence of any provision, the chairman of the meeting decides the procedure, in which case he should keep in mind the following general rules:

- 1. Whenever a departure from the usual voting procedure is to be made, the assent of the meeting must be obtained.
- 2. All issues should be decided by a simple majority unless a special majority is prescribed.
- 3. A vote once cast cannot be withdrawn or altered.
- 4. Absentee votes are not counted in the meeting.
- 5. Only members present and entitled to vote should be allowed to vote.
- 6. If proxies are allowed as per rules, they should be checked and verified.
- 7. The chairman is entitled to vote on a motion. He can also exercise his casting vote in case of a tie.
- 8. If the chairman does not cast his vote in case of a tie, the motion is lost.
- 9. Whenever the chairman can assume the sense of the house on ordinary items of business, he may get it recorded if no one present has any objection.
- 10. Declaration of the voting result by the chairman is final. In case of declaration on a show d hand, members present can demand a poll.

Check Your Progress B

- 1. Fill in the blanks. selecting appropriate word(s) from those given within brackets:
 - i) To stop confirmation of discussion on a motion and to put it to vote immediately any member can move a ______ Motion (next business/closure/adjournment)

ii)	If a 'previous question' motion is put to vote and carried, discussion
	on the original motion is (resumed after a
	while/stopped and cannot be revived/postponed)
iii)	When there is voting by show of hand, the chairman
	give the details of votes for and against the motion. (must/should need not)
iv)	Voting through secret ballot reflects the opinion of members which
	is (genuine/free from undue influence/free from prejudice)
v)	By taking a poll, the sense of the meeting can be ascertained more. (easily/quickly/accurately).

- 2. State whether the following statements are True or False.
 - i) In a co-operative society meeting, each member has only one vote irrespective of his monetary interest in the society.
 - ii) If the chairman does not use his casting vote, it means there is no tie.
 - iii) The chairman ruling on a point of order may or may not be put to vote.
 - iv) The chairman has power to reject a closure motion after it has been moved and seconded.
 - v) Whenever a meeting is adjourned for want of quorum and it is decided to be held after a specified time, a separate notice must be issued in writing to all members.
 - vi) If the members object a poll cannot be taken without first tying a show of hands to determine the sense of the meeting.
 - vii) Voting by division is the most common practice of ascertaining the sense of a meeting in all organisations.

21.6 MINUTES OF MEETINGS

21.6.1 Meaning and Importance

Literal meaning of the word 'minutes' is a note to preserve the memory of anything. The minutes of a meeting are a written record of the proceedings including the business transacted, decisions taken and resolutions arrived at. The object of keeping minutes to preserve a clear, conscious and accurate record of the conclusions reached in the meeting of a constituted body which would serve as a reminder of the subjects dealt with and the actions to be taken in future. The minutes once confirmed at a subsequent meeting are acceptable as evidence of the proceeding.

Minutes of meetings may be of two kinds:

- 1. Minutes of Decisions; and
- 2. Minutes of Narrations

Minutes of decisions: Minutes of decisions are also known as minutes of resolutions. Here, the details of the discussion held in the meeting are omitted and only the final decisions taken on every item are recorded in the form of resolutions. These resolutions are usually in the affirmative form and begin with the words ''Resolved that", or "It was resolved that"

Minutes of narration: These are records of businesses covered in a meeting including the discussions and arguments in favour or against a particular proposition, the number of votes cast for and against a motion, etc. Minutes of narration also record the items like the number of members present, the receipt of apologies for absence, the submission of routine reports , and the passing of a vote of thanks to the chairman.

Objects of Minutes: Recording of minutes of a meeting helps in achieving many objectives which can be listed as follows:

- 1. Human memory is short and it is not possible to remember all of what transcribes or is decided in a meeting after a lapse of some time. Thus to avoid any dispute in future, the recording of minutes is imperative.
- 2. Minutes constitute a permanent record of the resolutions passed or the decisions taken which show an empirical progress of the body or organisation.
- 3. Minutes, once confirmed by the chairman in the subsequent meeting, are acceptable as legal documentary evidence in the courts of law in connection with any relevant matter.
- 4. It is obligatory on the part of every registered body to have a record of proceedings at their respective meetings. So, recording of minutes is necessary to comply with legal requirements as well.

Importance of Minutes: In the absence of proper recording and maintenance of the minutes, it may not fulfil an important legal requirement. It may also create differences of views and dispute among the members as to what happened and what was decided in the meeting.

A Minute Book containing all the decisions taken in a meeting is the starting point to take systematic action on any resolution sooner or later. Minutes show the sense of the meeting on any item and the same may have to be conveyed to the person concerned if it is so required.

Recording of decisions regarding appointment, promotion, retirement, leave, etc., of the officers and other employees of the organisation is a routine but very important requirement. If the minutes of such decisions are not available, it may cause serious problems. Problems may also arise in respect of other decisions a5 well. Thus, the importance of recording minutes of meetings cannot be minimised at any stage in the life of any organisation.

Distinction between Minutes and Report: When a summary of the proceedings of one or more meetings is prepared for the information of

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members or for the press, it is known as a report. But it should not be confused with minutes though both are records of proceedings of a meeting.

- 1. Minutes are records of decisions of a meeting which are prepared in the form of resolutions while a report is drafted in a narrative form. A report contains discussions and arguments as well as the decisions taken.
- 2. Minutes record the exact workings of resolutions. They may include the names of the mover and the seconder. On the other hand, a report gives the gist of the decisions. It may or may not contain the exact wordings of resolutions.
- 3. Separate minutes are prepared for each meeting while a report may be prepared as a summary of the proceedings of more than one meeting.
- 4. Minutes are drafted by the secretary while a report may be written by any person who has been assigned the task to perform.
- 5. Minutes serve as authentic official record of the proceedings and decisions of a meeting and are accepted as legal evidence in the count of law, but the reports are not normally accepted as legal evidence.

21.6.2 Drafting of Minutes

It is the responsibility of the secretary to get the minutes of a meeting recorded. He should take notes of the proceedings as the meeting progresses. He should cover all the important points and should write the minutes in a proper minute book soon after the meeting is over.

Delay in the preparation of minutes may result in omissions or use of vague and inaccurate language. Moreover, it is essential that minutes should be recorded in a methodical and business like manner.

While drafting the minutes of a meeting, the following precautions should be taken:

- 1. Minutes should be brief, precise, factual and free from ambiguity.
- 2. Minutes should set out exactly what was transacted at the meeting. Exact wordings of the resolutions should be recorded to avoid the risk of subsequent misinterpretation.
- 3. If no conclusion is reached on any item at the meeting it should be clearly mentioned.
- 4. The minutes should also include the names of movers and seconders, the manner of voting and the results of voting.
- 5. Minutes should be written in the past tense, third person and generally in affirmative form. As far as possible superfluous words should be avoided.
- 6. Minutes should not contain any matter which is defamatory, irrelevant or immaterial to the meetings or detrimental to the organisation.

- 7. Arguments advanced for and against any motion should not find a place in the minutes. Moreover, partiality or bias towards any person or group should be avoided in writing the minutes.
- 8. Recording of minutes should follow the same sequence of items as given in the agenda. In case of variation, the exact order in which the business took place should be followed.
- 9. Pages of the Minutes Book should be numbered and the Minutes Book should be properly bound. Separate minute books should be kept for general meetings and for meetings of standing or permanent committees.
- 10. Minutes should specifically mention the nature and kind of meeting held e.g., Sub-committee Meeting, Board Meeting, Annual Meeting, General Meeting, etc.
- 11. Minutes should clearly indicate the date, time and place of the meeting.
- 12. The minutes must give the name of the presiding officer (chairman), and the names of the members attending the meeting. In the case of a general body meeting only the number of persons present in the meeting may be recorded.
- 13. Names of absentees and apologies for absence should also be recorded wherever possible.
- 14. All items of the business transacted in a meeting should be serially numbered and wherever necessary, their heading and subheadings should be given.
- 15. When any reference is made to any letter, report or statement with regard to any item of business the date of each such document should be mentioned in the minutes.
- 16. All decisions on items relating to financial statements, accounts, appointment of officers and other employees made, salaries decided upon, etc., expenditure authorised with exact amounts, instructions to directors, secretary or any other official, etc. should all be recorded separately as they appear in the agenda, with no element of vagueness, ambiguity, or scope of double interpretation. The exact text of each resolution should be recorded.
- 17. Minutes should end with a vote of thanks to the chair.
- 18. Minutes when signed constitute an official record of the proceedings of the meeting. The chairman should initial each of the pages which contain the minutes, sign in full at the end and note the date. The secretary should also initial the minutes.

21.6.3 Circulation of Minutes

Although it is not a statutory requirement that the minutes of a meeting should be circulated among members. It is generally done in practice. This procedure serves several purposes, viz.,

- 1. Members who wish to keep a record of the minutes have copies of their own
- 2. Members who could not attend the meeting come to know what was transacted in that meeting.
- 3. Members who attended the meeting may be prepared to point out whether the minutes have been correctly recorded or not.
- 4. When the minutes are to be confirmed in the subsequent meeting, it will save the because the chairman may say, "Since the minutes of the previous meeting have been circulated among the members, they may be taken as read." If the members have any point to raise, they may do so, otherwise the minutes are improved and the secretary need not read the same.

21.6.4 Confirmation of Minutes

Confirmation of minutes of the previous meeting is the first item of agenda at the subsequent meeting. Minutes become an authentic record of the proceedings of a meeting as soon as they are confirmed by the chairman at the next meeting. Two situations may arise in connection with confirmation.

Firstly, if the minutes have already been circulated among the members and if there are no objections as to omission or alteration of any part or whole of the contents, they will be taken as read in subsequent meetings. The chairman gets over the formality of asking the members whether the minutes may be taken as read, and then puts his initial on each page and signature at the end of the minutes confirming their corrections. The secretary will also initial the last page of the minutes.

Secondly, where the minutes of the previous meeting have not been circulated earlier, the chairman will ask the secretary to read out the minutes who has to read them from the beginning to end unless all the members present agree that unimportant parts like the attendance, names of the persons present, congratulatory or condolence resolutions etc. may not be read. The chairman will then ask the members whether or not the minutes have been correctly recorded. In case of any error or missing word or figure, necessary correction will be made. No overwriting or use of eraser is permitted. All corrections or alterations should be duly initialled by the chairman and the secretary. If a correction in the minutes recorded is to be made in respect of matters not accepted at a later meeting, another minutes has to be recorded rescinding the former. But in no circumstances should the former be deleted or corrected

No discussion or alteration is permitted once the minutes have been confirmed by the members and signed by the chairman. The confirmed minutes immediately become authentic official records which can be used for future reference or as written evidence as and when so required.

21.7 DUTIES OF SECRETARY

Meetings are essential for proper functioning of any association of persons, and it is the secretary of the association who has the responsibility of making them meaningful. He is required to make necessary preparations before the meeting, take notes and assist the chairman during the proceedings, and finally do the needful to implement the decisions after the meeting.

Thus the secretary, elected or nominated, honorary or a paid employee, has to act as a recorder, executive of operations, and a general steward of the meeting. On the one hand he has to take me off the statutory requirements, and on the other, he should perform all the routine operations. The secretary must be alert performing his duties before, during and after the meeting.

21.7.1 Duties before the Meeting

- 1. In consultation with the chairman, the secretary should decide the date, time and place of the meeting depending upon the nature and importance of the meeting and expected gathering.
- 2. The secretary should then arrange to book the hall or conference room if it is a general body meeting. But if it is a small meeting like the Board Meeting or a Committee Meeting, it can be arranged in the organisation's premises or in a small conference room.
- 3. The secretary must prepare the notice and agenda and, after getting the approval of the chairman, will get the same printed, if necessary.
- 4. He will make arrangements for the issue of notice and agenda papers under postal certificate. If it is a small meeting consisting of local members only, papers may be hand delivered.
- 5. If the meeting requires the presentation of accounts, Audit Report, Annual Report or any other statement, the secretary will get them ready. Draft Annual Report is generally prepared in advance and approved by the chairman. After all these papers are ready, they may be printed, if it is required to be sent to the members along with the agenda papers.
- 6. The secretary will arrange for necessary furniture, stationery and refreshments required for the meeting, Advance order must be placed with the concerned suppliers and caterers.
- 7. If the chairman is required to make a speech or present a report in the meeting, the secretary has to provide necessary information to him beforehand. As a matter of fact, he may have to assist the chairman to write his speech or report. In certain cases, he may himself prepare the draft and present the same to the chairman for approval.
- 8. The Secretary has to get the chairman's speech or Report or any other financial Statement printed, and circulate the same among members either before or during the meeting. In the case of financial reports, the secretary is required to work with the accountant.



- 9. The secretary must collect relevant correspondence, documents, files and forms concerning the items of the agenda and keep them handy for references, if required. Minutes of the previous meeting must be written and kept ready for confirmation.
- 10. The secretary may hire the services of assistant, attendant, stewards, for the day of the meeting to attend various petty jobs.
- 11. Immediately before the meeting, he must arrange for proper entry of members. Their attendance cards may be checked and arrangements made for recording their attendance if it is a General Body meeting or Extra Ordinary or Special Meeting.
- 12. If proxies are also allowed, the secretary should make arrangements to receive, check and list the proxies in a systematic order. He may appoint outside scrutinisers to check the proxies if necessary.
- 13. He has to make all arrangements for a vote or poll on any item of the agenda. Necessary stationery, ballot boxes, locks, list of members, etc, should be available. scrutinisers for counting votes, whether on show of hands or by ballot, must be appointed in consultation with the chairman.
- 14. If the proceedings are to be reported in newspapers, arrangements should be made to invite the reporters and proper assistance and hospitality should be provided to them.

21.7.2 Duties during the Meeting

- 1. On the day of meeting, the secretary should be present at the venue much before the meeting commences to oversee the various arrangements. In case he is unable to come before the meeting starts, he must make alternative arrangements.
- 2. He should check the seating arrangements both on the dias as well as in the main hall. He should assign duties to the stewards to check the admission cards, if any, and to guide the members to their respective seats. Separate arrangements should be made for members from the press.
- 3. He should personally check that supplies of stationery, pencils, writing paper, pins, etc., are available and kept at their proper places. He must also double check the drinking water arrangements and distribution of refreshments to each and every person present.
- 4. He should see that attendance is properly recorded in the Attendance Register. He should know the correct number of people attending before the commencement of the meeting to ascertain whether necessary quorum is present or not.
- 5. If the copies of Chairman's Speech, Secretary's Report, or other Financial Statements are to be distributed among members, he should make proper arrangements for distribution. The papers may be handed over to members either at the entrance, or the set of papers can be placed on each



- desk or table before the beginning of the meeting. He should give instructions accordingly.
- 6. He should check that minutes, books, notices, reports, etc., are available by his seat which should be close to the chairman's seat.
- 7. In case there is no permanent chairman or the permanent chairman is not present, the secretary should see that a person is nominated as chairman of the meeting, as per rules and regulations.
- 8. After the chairman has taken his seat, the secretary has to read the notice convening the meeting, minutes of the previous meeting, and other reports as and when called upon.
- 9. The secretary should give all assistance to the chairman in conducting the meetings. He must convey necessary statutory or other information to the chairman if necessary to decide on matters arising during the meeting.
- 10. He should arrange for members to propose and second such resolutions as are particularly desirable lobbies moved in the meeting especially on matters like election and remuneration.
- 11. The secretary should make suitable notes on the agenda papers or on >my other paper. He should ensure that all the important points have been noted. Exact wordings of each resolution should be recorded. All these notes should be used for writing the minutes in a proper order.
- 12. At the end of the meeting he should thank the members as well as propose a vote of thanks to the Chairman.

21.7.3 Duties after the Meeting

After the meeting the secretary should do the following:

- 1. He should prepare the draft minutes with the help of notes taken at the meeting, and get them approved by the chairman.
- 2. After the chairman's approval, the secretary should write the minutes in the Minutes Book. Wherever required, he should arrange to circulate copies of the minutes among members within the stipulated time. He should keep the Minutes Book in safe custody.
- 3. The secretary should then carry out his arrangements, send letters and copies of resolutions and returns to the concerned authorities.
- 4. He is to implement all decisions like appointments, despatch of papers, dividend warrants, share certificates, etc., and comply with necessary formalities relating to such decisions.
- 5. He should also arrange to send press reports, wherever so required.
- 6. He should proceed to make arrangements to convene the next meeting.

Check Your Progress C

)	Define the term 'Minutes'.

- 2) State whether the following statements are True or False.
 - i) Minutes record the sense of the meeting on various items and constitute a permanent record of the decision taken.
 - ii) Minutes as well as report of meeting both are accepted as evidence in court of law.
 - iii) Arguments for and against any motion must be incorporated on the minutes.
 - iv) Minutes must include the name of the chairman and names of the members present.
 - v) If the minutes of a meeting are circulated among members, the same may be continued, subject to corrections without being read out by the secretary.
 - vi) If a decision recorded in the minutes is not accepted by the members at a subsequent meeting, the earlier decision should he deleted from the minutes.
 - vii) The list of members invited to attend a meeting should be reality available before the meeting starts as well as during the meeting.
 - viii) At the end of a meeting, the secretary should immediately write the final minutes in the Minutes Book and circulate copies among members.
 - ix) The Press Reports should be sent to newspapers under the chairman's signature.
 - x) It is the responsibility of the secretary to keep the minutes Book in safe custody.

21.8 LET US SUM UP

The general rules governing the discussion and debate in meetings are based on established practices, customs and conventions. Specific requirements are sometimes prescribed in the bye-laws and Articles also.

The most important rule in connection with debate and discussion is that these should be confined to the motion and amendments before the meeting and should be relevant to the matter being debated.

The order of business to be transacted in a meeting should be the same as set out on the agenda unless the meeting decides to divide. The routine items should be disposed of before taking up other items on the agenda one by one.

A motion is the starting point of a business on the agenda of a meeting. The purpose of a motion is to introduce a certain business iii a formal manner and suggest that all discussion should be held accordingly. Motions should be formally moved and seconded except the condolence or congratulatory motions.

A motion can be altered by moving an amendment by any member who has not spoken on the main motion earlier. The amendment, duly moved and seconded, should not introduce any change in the meaning of the main resolution but it can add, delete, or substitute certain terms in the matter of the motion. Similarly, an amendment to an amendment can be moved by any person who has neither spoken on the main resolution or on any amendment to it. A resolution is the end result of a motion if the majority of members give positive votes in its favour. A resolution ii a decision of the meeting which is binding on all the members even if some of them disagree. It should be clear and exact and finally recorded in the Minutes Book.

There are various formal ways of interruption during the discussion on a motion with a view to getting more information to make a sound decision.

Amendments may be moved to make the man motion more specific, exact, clear or convenient. Points of order may be raised to clarify some points, or to remove any irregularity in the conduct of meetings.

Formal motions may be moved in the form of a closure, previous questions, or next business, for temporarily shelving the debate for a short period, or postponing ~t to the subsequent meeting.

Adjournment of a debate or a meeting could also be moved in order to collect more information on the matter under discussion, or to remove any irregularity, or avoid any undesirable situation caused by the misbehaviour of some members present.

A meeting can be postponed to a later date if it is inconvenient to hold it on the date and place announced in the notice. Postponement does not mean cancellation.

To ascertain the sense of a meeting the chairman may adopt any of the recognised methods of voting. It could be either by show of hand, standing vote, division, ballot or pooling. The chairman has to follow the prescribed procedure, if any, given in the rules and regulations.

Minutes are the record of proceedings of a meeting. They should contain all the information pertaining to the meeting that can be of some future use. It is essential to keep proper documentary evidence of what resolutions have been passed and when, and only the minutes can serve this purpose.

Drafting of minutes needs full attention and command over expression by the writer which is generally the secretary of the organisation. He should record all the details as to date, time and place of the meeting, attendance, abstentions, business transacted, and resolutions passed. The draft minutes should be only a factual statement without any prejudice or bias towards anyone present or not in the meeting. Drafting minutes signed by the chairman may be circulated among the members, if it is the agreed practice. In that case, minutes can be taken as read and confirmed in the subsequent meeting and, after the approval by the members, they are confirmed and signed by the chairman.

Confirmation of minutes is only a means of ensuring correct recording of the proceedings. Any corrections or alteration in the minutes can be done only before confirmation.

21.9 KEY WORDS

Adjournment: Discontinuing a meeting with the object of resuming it at a later date.

Amendment: Proposed alteration in the terms of a motion moved in a meeting.

Ballot: Ascertaining the sense of a meeting on any issue which involves members giving their vote or opinion on a ballot paper.

Closure: A motion moved in a legislative body by any member drawing the attention of the minister and requesting him to explain a point raised.

Division: A method of ascertaining the sense of a meeting whereby members favouring the motion and those against it form themselves into two separate groups.

Minutes: Written record of the proceedings of a meeting including the business transacted and decision taken and resolutions passed.

Motion: A proposal on any item of business submitted for consideration and decision at a meeting; a proposed resolution.

Next Business: A motion to stop discussion on the main motion forthwith and to take up the next item on the agenda.

Point of Order: An interruption during the proceedings at a meeting to draw the chairman's attention to an irregularity of procedure or some other point.

Postponement: Decisions to hold a meeting on a future date due to an inconvenience proceeding to prevent a vote being taken on the main motion or to share it.

Resolution: A motion carried by the majority of persons present and voting in a meeting.

Show of Hands: A method of voting whereby members are required to raise their hands respecting for and against a motion.



21.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

v) True A 1 i) False True iii) True iv) False ii) False vii) True viii) False vi) i) Opinion ii) The iii) Procedural iv) Resolution v) Does Not Meeting B i) Next ii) Stopped iii) Keep Not iv) Free from v) Accurately and cannot be Undue Influence **Business** Received 2 i) True ii) False (iii False iv) False v) True False vii) True viii) False vi) v) True \mathbf{C} 2 i) True ii) False iii) False iv) True

21.11 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

vii)

True

False

1) State the important rules governing debate and discussion in meetings.

viii)

False

ix)

False

x) True

- 2) What is meant by 'Order of business' in a meeting? Enumerate the items of agenda in a serial order.
- 3) Define the term 'Motion'. Describe the procedure for moving a motion.
- 4) What are the conditions to be satisfied for a valid motion? How can a motion be withdrawn?
- 5) What are the various ways in which a motion may be amended? State the basic rules to be followed while dealing with amendments.
- 6) Define a resolution. How does it differ from a motion? What is the effect of a resolution as regards members?
- 7) Write explanation notes on:
 - i) Point of order
 - ii) Closure

vi)

- iii) Next Question
- iv) Previous Question
- v) Minutes
- 8) Distinguish between:
 - a) Minutes and Minutes of Narration
 - b) Adjournment and Postponement
 - c) Minutes and Reports of Meetings
- 9) What is meant by 'Interruption' in a meeting? What are the ways in which debate or discussion may be interrupted?
- 10) Explain and distinguish between 'Closure' and 'Previous Question' in relation to a meeting.

- 11) Describe the usual methods of ascertaining the sense of a meeting.
- 12) When and how can a vote by 'Poll' be demanded? Discuss the proper procedure of taking a poll.
- 13) Discuss the principles which the secretary should keep in view while drafting the minutes of a meeting. Distinguish between 'Minutes of Decisions' and 'Minutes of Narration'.
- 14) What are the duties of a secretary before the commencement of a meeting and during a meeting?
- 15) Enumerate the duties of a secretary after a meeting.

Note: These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.



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